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VOL. 10
NO. 4

Are Your Students *Really* Learning?

Carol Amico Can Help You Find The Answer

See Page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

School Involvement: Not for Parents Only

November's always busy for NEA members observing American Education Week (AEW). But November 1991 offers us more opportunities—and more challenges—than usual.

November 18 marks the debut of *Teacher TV*—a co-production of NEA and The Learning Channel (see story, p. 17). On November 24, the Walt Disney Company will broadcast the second annual American Teacher Awards (see TV Tips, p. 12). And November 17 through 23, we'll celebrate AEW.

The convergence of these events offers us a remarkable opportunity to renew and expand community support for public education. And the 1991 AEW theme—"Schools and Communities: Partners for a Strong America"—invites us to do exactly that.

We ought to accept this invitation. Indeed, we must. The AEW theme highlights the fact that the challenges confronting education—and confronting America—demand a tight partnership among school employees, parents, business leaders, senior citizens, health professionals, and government officials. The education of America's young people requires a coalition of all Americans.

This we know. But in crafting this coalition we're in for some rough going. In fact, demographic trends tell us that never in United States history have the odds been more heavily stacked against us.

Let me explain.

A century ago, 80 percent of American households included a child under the age of 18. Today, only 35 percent of American households include a child under 18.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Children are now a *direct concern* to only a minority of adults. In the words of syndicated columnist George Will, "Children are now a minority interest." And government priorities—in particular, federal priorities—reflect this fact.

We can't change demographics. But we can change attitudes. All Americans have a stake in the education of the children who will determine the destiny of our democracy. Our challenge is to make it plain that the public schools belong to the public—not just to that part of the public with school-age children.

We're already making steady progress in driving home this message. We're doing that by redefining school restructuring. We're making school restructuring a pathway to the re-democratization of American education.

In cities and towns across the country—in Pinellas County, Florida, and Ravenna, Ohio, in Memphis, Tennessee, and Riverside, California—our Association members are breaking down the walls between school and community. They're putting out a welcome mat—and the welcome extends to parents and non-parents alike.

Our Association is leading the way in returning local schools to their rightful owners—local citizens. Now we must accelerate this development.

All of us have come to understand that school restructuring must do more than give greater latitude and authority to school employees. Restructuring must create conditions that make it easier for us to reach out to our communities. In other words, the goal of school restructuring is not just to empower school staff. *The goal is to empower communities.*

As we expand our restructuring initiatives, we need to remain faithful to the principles that—

- School restructuring is another name for creating the conditions that will make our schools true community centers.
- School restructuring is another name for returning decision-making authority to local communities.
- Most importantly, school restructuring is another name for giving new life to the most insightful statement in the entire 1983 Nation at Risk report: "our schools can rise no higher than the communities that support them."

We may not be able to change demographics. But we can counter them. We can remind our neighbors and remind America that involvement in the education of America's next generation of leaders is a patriotic—not just a parental—responsibility.

If we continue to break new ground on this front, we'll add one more reason to celebrate this special November that brings us the American Teacher Awards, the premiere of *Teacher TV,* and American Education Week. And chances are, by the time Thanksgiving arrives, we'll have plenty of reasons for giving thanks.

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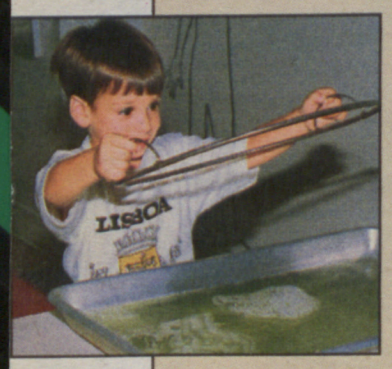

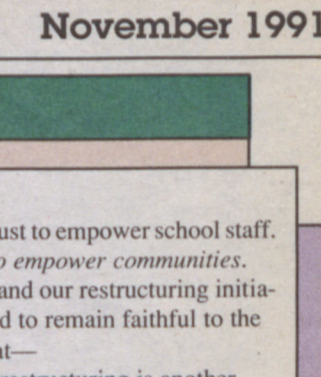

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Cover photograph by Mark Sasahara

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NATIONAL NEWS

NEA: 'Photo Ops' Are NOT Enough

Candidates, start your engines. The 1992 presidential election is only 12 months away—and NEA's endorsement process has begun. Decision #1: No endorsement for George Bush.

Early this September, NEA member Pat Lemaire, an elementary teacher in Lewiston, Maine, had a special visitor in her classroom: the President of the United States.

With the President came an entourage of television cameras and news photographers. The President's school visit, one of many he has made in recent years, made, as they say in the trade, a perfect "photo opportunity."

For Pat Lemaire, "photo ops" are not enough. When President Bush talked about how to help teachers who aren't doing their jobs, Lemaire reminded him that there are politicians who aren't doing theirs.

Last month, meeting in Washington, D.C., the 70 members of the NEA-PAC Council, the governing body of NEA's political action arm, delivered that same message.

The Council, taking NEA's first step in the 1992 Presidential campaign, decided unanimously that George Bush shouldn't receive NEA's endorsement.

"The President may be called many things," said NEA President Keith Geiger, "but he can't be called the Education President. George Bush doesn't warrant the NEA seal of approval."

Geiger noted that the Bush Administration recently hired private film crews to shoot the President's appearance at a Washington, D.C., junior high.

"NEA cannot endorse a President who spends $26,000 of taxpayers' money on a staged media event—while cutting school lunch funds for our neediest youngsters," said the NEA president.

Wide World Photo

President Bush and wife, Barbara, read children's books to kindergartners in NEA member Pat Lemaire's class in Lewiston, Maine. A few weeks later, the President went to a Washington, D.C. junior high for yet another 'photo op.'

Council members carefully weighed the Bush Administration record before making their decision. On the plus side, they found that the President has helped focus attention on education.

In 1989, for instance, the President called together the nation's governors to discuss the needs of education and consider strategies for improving it. In 1990, the President endorsed six ambitious National Education Goals that had been adopted by the governors.

But beyond this rhetorical support for improving education, NEA-PAC Council members found little substance. In everything from his legislative proposals to his exercise of regulatory authority, President Bush has delivered precious little to help men and women who work in education.

A few facts:

► For fiscal years 1990, 1991, and 1992, the Bush Administration proposed spending levels for aid to education that were *less* than schools needed to keep pace with inflation and enrollment increases.

► The very first National Education Goal says that all students must be ready to learn by the time they enter school. The Bush Administration proposed cutting the block grant for the local agencies that operate more than a third of all Head Start programs.

► The Bush Administration's "America 2000" plan to improve education, announced last spring, offers no new resources for schools. Instead, the plan advocates diverting taxpayer dollars to private schools through "choice" programs.

► NEA members and President Bush also disagree on other matters. Of the 22 bills that the President has vetoed, half were backed by clear legislative positions taken by the nearly 9,000 delegates to NEA's annual Representative Assembly. Among the measures President Bush has vetoed: the Family and Medical Leave Act, which would have guaranteed employees 12 weeks unpaid leave to care for their newborns or handle family health emergencies.

Who will receive NEA's endorsement in the 1992 Presidential race? That question will be decided through a process that will involve NEA members at every level of the Association. Here's a timetable:

► November 1991: NEA President Geiger interviews all other viable Presidential candidates for NEA endorsement, then mails all state affiliates a list of candidates who've completed the NEA endorsement process and who've demonstrated a commitment to a national agenda consistent with the Association's goals and principles.

► Candidates will also be asked to complete a written questionnaire, and the full text of their answers will be published in *NEA Today*.

► Fall 1991-Winter 1992: NEA local and state affiliates host open hearings on the Presidential campaign. Available at these hearings: candidate questionaires, George Bush's record on education, and videotapes of Geiger's interviews.

► April 30, 1992: A full summary of the views expressed by NEA members at the open hearings goes to the NEA-PAC Council and the NEA Board of Directors. President Geiger, at this time, can recommend a primary endorsement of one candidate from either or both major political parties *or* recommend a primary endorsement of more than one candidate from either or both major political parties *or* recommend a general endorsement of one candidate for President of the United States *or* recommend no endorsement.

If Geiger makes a primary or gen-eral endorsement recommendation, the NEA-PAC Council will vote to accept or reject that recommendation.

► May 1, 1992: If the NEA-PAC Council approves an endorsement recommendation by Geiger on April 30, the NEA Board of Directors will vote on this recommendation the following day. If Geiger recommends a general election endorsement that is accepted by both the Council and the Board, delegates to the most recent Representative Assembly will vote on that recommendation.

—Diane Dismuke

HEROES & ZEROES

A toast to *Publisher's Weekly*, the book industry's trade magazine, for its bold September 27 cover. Instead of the usual paid advertisement, magazine editors printed an open letter to President Bush, urging him to read Jonathan Kozol's new book on education finance, *Savage Inequalities*.

The unprecedented unpaid endorsement concludes: "There is no doubt that we will have to spend money, and a lot of it, to bring genuine equality to our schools."

A toast to Kozol (above), too, for a hard-hitting and timely tome.

Business isn't always so supportive. The Indianapolis-based Golden Rule Insurance Company is offering students half the tuition (up to $800) needed to attend the school of their choice. The first 750 recipients chose private schools.

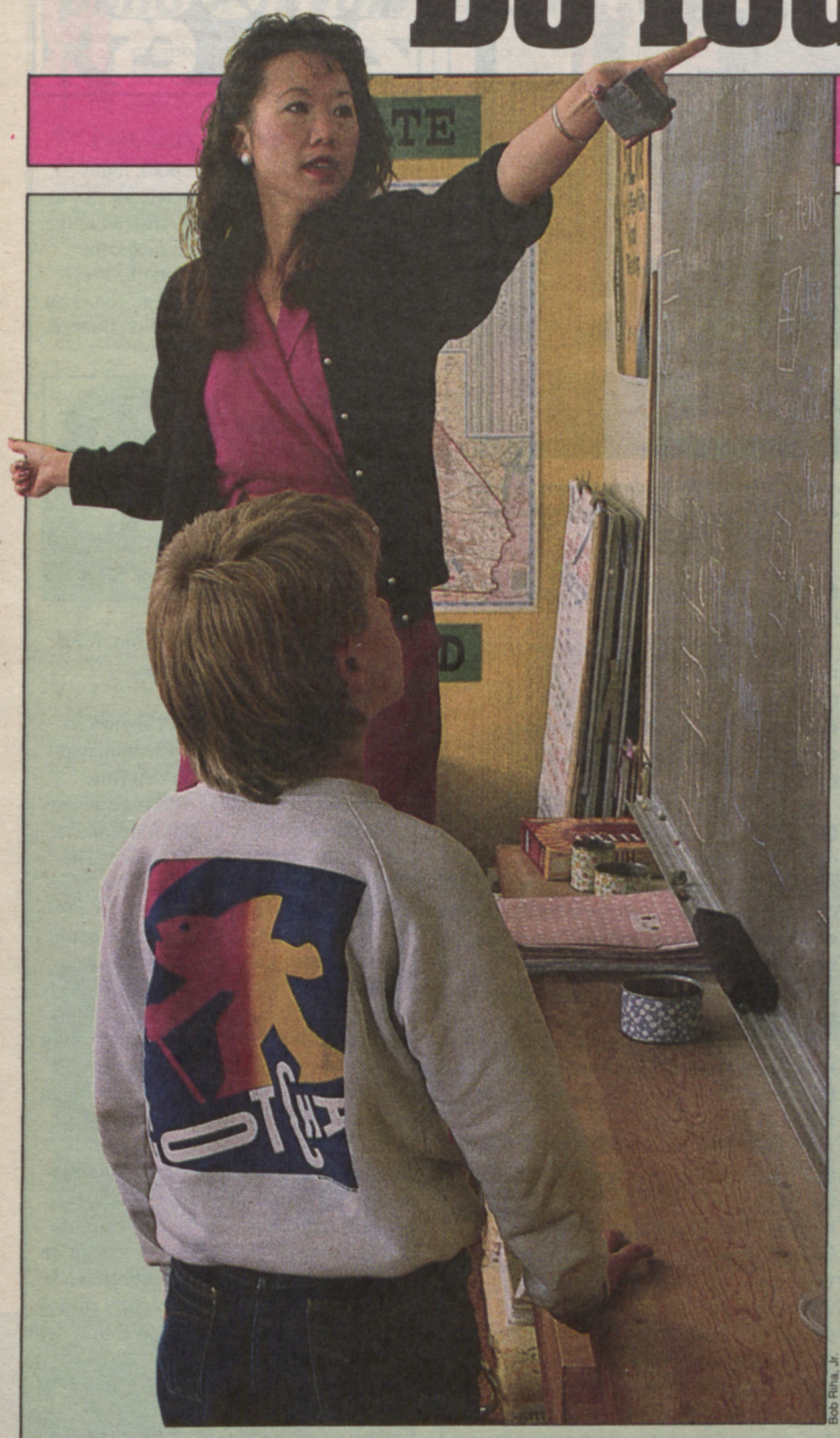
When told that public schools could use the money to make all schools schools of choice, Golden Rule CEO J. Patrick Rooney replied: "If they find that their students are leaving and going elsewhere, maybe they'll shape up." Forget Golden Rule. How about Golden Parachute?

A 21-gun salute to columnist William F. Buckley. Alarmed by news reports of guns in schools, he's taken a position surprisingly close to gun control. No liberal himself, Buckley recently chided conservatives for failure "to come forward with laws that are designedsubstantially to reduce the free flow of guns." Without a change, "the largest standing army in the world is likely to be our schoolchildren... And how... do you effectively punish a 10-year-old caught with a pistol?... The gun problem has to be approached at the other end, with focus on the suppliers."

Clamoring contradictions, Batman! The *L.A. Times* recently noted that the University of California cut its budget $300 million, raised student fees 40 percent — and pays its president $307,900. David Gardner, who headed Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education and helped pen *A Nation at Risk*, makes 30 percent more than his peers at Harvard, Stanford, and MIT. Time for *A State at Risk*?

COVER STORY

Do You Know How



Bob Riha, Jr.

Here's a look at three NEA members who've found new

IN CALIFORNIA

Coaching Each Other

If you want to know how you're doing, who can tell you better than another teacher?

That's the premise of "peer coaching," a variation of mentoring that gets to the heart of educators' questions about their performance in the classroom. For 15 years, educators in Modesto, California, have used peer coaching as one way to assess the quality of their work.

Jenlane Gee is a third-grade teacher at Siphard Elementary School. She's also a former California Teacher of the Year and was a finalist in the 1989 National Teacher of the Year competition.

Bob Riha, Jr.

Still, Gee insists, even a veteran needs to know what kind of impact she's having on her students. "Peer coaching is a way of monitoring our own profession," says Gee.

"Suppose you want to know whether your classroom management techniques are working, or you want help in questioning strategies. The best assessment system involves a peer you respect for expertise in those areas."

Here's how peer coaching works. A teacher goes to the administration and requests a colleague as a peer coach, then asks the colleague to come into the classroom and observe, for example, classroom management.

The district, using funds provided by its state-supported mentor program, supplies a substitute for the peer coach's class. During the observation, the peer coach keeps a log of events for discussion at a later meeting.

Those discussions are a chance for feedback and dialogue, explains Gee. "The peer coach asks me how I felt the class went, and then we'll discuss the observations. I can provide clarification on these and answer any questions about my goals for that day's class," she adds.

Her coach, Judy Mendoza, agrees. Three years ago, Gee and Mendoza, then a third grade teacher at Siphard, set up a peer coaching arrangement.

"As a peer coach, I might say to Jenlane, 'I noticed a group of students not staying on task'—if on-task behavior is what I'm looking for—or, 'I noticed that presenting this particular exercise in this way really kept the entire class engaged,'" says Mendoza. "We trust each other to hone in on the subtle qualities that make a difference in the classroom."

Because the process is strictly confidential—peer coaches' observations do not go on an educator's record—veteran and new teachers alike have faith in the results.

"That's the beauty of the system," says Jenlane Gee. "It's a non-threatening way to strengthen and encourage each other, colleague to colleague. Veterans have their experience and judgment to offer, and the new teachers can coach them on the latest techniques. Either way, we have real feedback from peers who know exactly what we experience in the classroom."

"When you have the opportunity to ask a colleague to walk into your classroom and validate your techniques or help you become an even better teacher," adds Mendoza, "everyone benefits—the students most of all."

—Anita Merina

IN KANSAS

Asking for Feedback

When veteran fourth grade teacher Lisa Bietau wants to know how she's doing, she just asks.

She asks parents and students. She asks herself, her colleagues, peer coaches, and the principal. And, by phone and computer, she asks a wider group of "critical friends"—teachers, researchers, and other education experts around the country.

As one of three teachers at Amanda Arnold Elementary working on the "Manhattan Assessment Project" (that's Manhattan, *Kansas*), Bietau's striving to collect as many opinions as possible.

Her project's goal: to find a better way to evaluate teaching and learning, not on a systemwide basis, but on a day-to-day classroom basis, where, as Bietau says, "the rubber hits the road."

"Normally, we don't stop to see how we're doing because we're just going so

COVER STORY

Well You're Teaching?

and meaningful ways to assess their own performance.

fast,'' she says. This year, Bietau's slowing down a bit to assess—and this assessment includes no traditional report cards, tests, or letter grades.

Instead, Bietau's giving students several opportunities to demonstrate mastery of key concepts. She's sitting down with students and parents to establish contracts—three-way ''pyramid pacts''—to help students reach individual goals.

Bietau is helping her 29 students compile portfolios designed to showcase improvement and ''celebrate our success.'' And she's meeting with parents four times a year to discuss progress.

''Before, kids folded over their papers so no one could see their grades. A lot of kids accepted *F*s and passively went on. But this challenges them—and me— to figure out another way.''

Consequently, Bietau has changed the way she teaches. ''I've taken the time to synthesize and digest the fourth grade curriculum—what's the essence of it? Then I set up not only lessons but assessments that allow kids to prove they've captured that essence. It forces me to think very hard about how I spend my time with these kids.''

When Bietau hits a snag or needs a fresh viewpoint, she often turns to her colleagues at Amanda Arnold, one of the dozens of schools aligned with NEA's National Center for Innovation, or to the faculty members at the University of Kansas who work with them.

Another source of ideas, support, and energy: NEA's School Renewal Network, a computer link-up that allows hundreds of teachers aligned with NEA's Center to trade strategies via computer.

Sometimes Bietau's students can help, too. When several students had trouble understanding a geometry concept, Bietau retaught the lesson another way.

''I learned that students were confused because in some of the examples width looks like height. That was glitching them, and once we sorted it out, they really did quite well.''

Sometimes, Bietau adds, ''I get kids up there to explain things. They understand where they were confused and how they straightened it out. Getting kids to be more reflective is part of what I'm trying to do.

''In fact,'' she adds, ''I guess I'll know how I'm doing when the responsibility for learning is shared.''

How do *you* know how you're doing? Bietau says there's value in just asking the question. ''As long as I keep asking myself that,'' she explains, ''I know I'll be doing a better job.''

—Stefanie Weiss

Chris Ochsner

To help assess whether learning is taking place, Kansas teacher Lisa Bietau negotiates three-way "pyramid pacts" with students and their parents.

IN VERMONT

Checking Kids' Portfolios

''I find out how I'm doing by analyzing portfolios of my students' work,'' says Starksboro fourth and fifth grade teacher Carol Amico, ''and by seeing how they measure up against other Vermont fourth-graders.''

Beginning in 1990-91, pilot groups of Vermont fourth and eighth graders—50 classes at each grade level—have created portfolios of their writing and math work, explains Amico. The writing portfolios consist of a ''best piece'' chosen by the student, a collection of some half-dozen other pieces of writing, and a writing test taken by all the students and rated by the testmaker.

All the fourth grade teachers in the project got together for training, then rated one another's portfolios, says Amico. Finally, the teachers rated the work of their own classes.

''I was proud that my students' work—both the compositions and the writing test—measured up very well against the state standard,'' says Amico. ''Working with the portfolios is changing the way I teach.

''I used to emphasize the input, the process: what steps do you take to create a final written composition? Now I focus more on product: what is a good piece of writing, and how do you get to that? I'm teaching the kids the vocabulary of the criteria so through all the steps of the writing process they can think about what they're trying to do.''

Amico says the portfolio evaluations matched her own perceptions of students' work. ''With standardized tests,'' she notes, ''you can never be sure the test matches the curriculum. And a child may not do well in a testing situation, or may just have a bad day. With the portfolios, there aren't any real surprises.''

The criteria for the math portfolios, worked out last spring, emphasize communication. Amico's first math project this year: take eight birthday candles and anything else you want and create a three-minute timer.

But the problem solving was just the beginning. Students then wrote about their experience—what worked and what didn't, what they did when something didn't work.

''They were very creative about that, too,'' Amico says. ''One student wrote as if he were being interviewed for TV, another pretended to be a mad scientist, another pretended he lived before clocks were invented.''

''When I was asked to be in the project, I wasn't exactly thrilled,'' Amico acknowledges. ''The training would take a lot of time out of school and a lot of extra work, and I wasn't sure 50 teachers could agree on what's a good piece of writing.

''Now I feel really glad and honored that I was part of it. It's not one of those fads that goes out the window. It's good for students, and it's going to stay.''

In fact, the writing and math portfolios are being required for all Vermont fourth and eighth graders this year, and in the future other subjects will be added. Each student will keep the portfolio through high school graduation.

Amico sums up the benefits to teachers: ''Now that we know the standards and the goal, we'll be able to change our teaching in order to reach them.''

—Jane Power

Mark Sasahara

HUMAN RIGHTS

Women In Education: How Far Can They Go?

How do women rise to top-level administrative jobs in education? Slowly. And, because of societal barriers, rarely.

In the late 1970s, Michigan's Trini Johannesen interviewed for a job as elementary principal. "Armed with all the credentials that male administrators had—teaching experience, contacts, education, and even union leadership—I thought I could easily get a job in administration," she says.

But the school district considered that union leadership a potential conflict of interest—even though it ignored similar activism in the records of male applicants.

Johannesen did the career-smart thing: She switched tracks. She's now vice president of the Michigan Education Association (MEA), chair of the NEA Women's Caucus, and an active member of the NEA Hispanic Caucus. And she's helping other women move up, too.

In trying to become a principal, Johannesen hit what the media call the "glass ceiling." That's the term, coined by the *Wall Street Journal* five years ago, for the invisible barriers that keep women from reaching executive and managerial positions. As Johannesen says, "Women can see the top jobs but can't get them."

According to 1988-89 data from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), only 5 percent of the nation's superintendents are women—and that's up from less than 1 percent in 1971.

Only 27 percent of the nation's principals are women. And while women head 34 percent of elementary schools, they account for only about 12 percent of secondary school principals.

Elwood Landis

Michigan's Trini Johannesen switched career tracks after she was blocked from becoming a school principal.

Pat Willis, who heads two elementary schools in Jackson City, Ohio, is only her district's fourth woman administrator ever.

"There are differences between the ways men and women become principals," Willis says. "With men, it's cut and dried. They go right from teacher to principal.

"Women are required to prove themselves," Willis explains, "and they're expected to put family obligations first while men aren't."

Willis became a principal in 1986, following an educational and career pattern that the literature calls typical for women. After high school and business school, she worked for an insurance company. At age 30, she enrolled in college, spending seven years earning her degree because she combined study with work and motherhood.

Once in education, Willis moved up in a traditionally female way. She moved from elementary to secondary school teacher, to school counselor, to principal. And on her way up, she not only took on extra assignments but earned two master's degrees and seven certifications.

Why is there a glass ceiling excluding women? For two reasons, according to Xenia Montenegro, research consultant and co-author of the AASA's *Women and Minorities in Administration.*

"There's the perception that women won't fit in with the all-male group at the top, like the school board," explains Montenegro. "And there's a fear women may act differently or emphasize different things and therefore be ineffective."

Montenegro also says that women's typical career route often acts as a barrier to advancement. "It's hard for women to move up in a straight line," she says. "Some don't go after careers as aggressively as they might because of family responsibilities. No matter how you cut it, women do far more work at home than men do."

More and more women are joining education's managerial ranks, in both school systems and Associations.

When you want to move beyond the glass ceiling, call on your Association. The NEA offers many opportunities for women as members to gain the skills necessary for effective leadership. Of particular interest is the NEA's Women's Leadership Training Program, which trains members in the personal and organizational skills needed to move up.

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

Tips for Moving Up

► Promote yourself. Don't just underpromise and overdeliver, hoping that a higher-up will discover you.

► Realize that you can't take care of everything. If you're combining family and career roles, don't let the super-mom syndrome burn you out.

► Continue your education. If the job you want calls for a particular degree, start studying for it right away. You can do it.

► Accept opportunities that come your way, even if they call for extra work or longer hours.

► Enlist the support of high-level mentors. They can help arrange promotions to give you the experience that a top job requires.

► Pick a school district with a reputation for gender and race fairness that encourages "fast tracks" and involves faculty members in decision making. Avoid districts whose employment policies reflect prejudice.

► Start networking. Women and minorities who have broken through the glass ceiling can give you valuable advice and contacts.

► Get moving-up training. Ask your local Association about participating in NEA's Women's Leadership Training Program.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Reform from the Roots

Last June, Rep. Carl C. Perkins, D-KY, a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, introduced H.R. 2819, The Rural Schools of America Act of 1991. The bill would provide funds to rural school districts for programs to meet the six National Education Goals as well as for repair, renovation, and construction of school buildings.

The NEA supports RSA, through its membership in Organizations Concerned About Rural Education. OCRE is a coalition of education, farm, and rural government and utility organizations.

Recently Rep. Perkins responded to *NEA Today's* questions about the Rural Schools Act.

Why do rural schools need their own bill?
The rural school system in this country is decaying before our eyes. The average rural school building is over 45 years old and in serious need of repair. Rural students have less access than other children to crucial formative programs, such as early childhood development programs. To compound the problem, the most successful graduates of rural schools move away.

How would RSA work differently from other federal aid to school programs?
The most obvious difference is that only rural districts will be able to apply for RSA funds. The bill would authorize $3 billion in the first year solely for two kinds of rural districts: those where at least 15 percent of the students are in poverty and those with fewer than 2,500 students.

NEA has granted funds to a North Dakota pilot project that's said to be a model for RSA. How does that project work?
It's an economic development project involving the state Department of Public Instruction, the State University, OCRE, and the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

The regional lab has come up with a way to use a redesign of education to reform the community. The strategy is to provide experiential learning for all ages, focused on the local economy, to help people find niches locally where they can set up shop as entrepreneurs. Ultimately, this will help us retain vital populations in rural areas.

Is it too soon to ask for direct support for RSA from NEA members?
No. We may get hearings this month and action on the bill may come in the second session of Congress, which begins after the New Year. NEA members should contact their House member and urge him or her to cosponsor H.R. 2819.

Local Look

VIRGINIA

Sheltered Students

For the mothers and children at a battered-women's shelter in Portsmouth, Virginia, school is often the last thing on anyone's mind. But members of the Portsmouth Education Association have made school a positive experience.

PEA, already a sponsor of the Help and Emergency Response shelters, developed a tutoring program to ease the children of battered mothers back into school, after sometimes weeks of hiding. The class locations are kept secret to prevent fathers from tracking down their family.

The classes have also become places for children to vent frustration or to simply have fun and feel good about themselves. "Sometimes," says PEA member Gordon Jones, "they just need somneone to talk to; they see me not just as a teacher but as a friend."

FLORIDA

Charlotte Teachers, ESP Join NEA

Charlotte County teachers and education support workers chose the Florida Teaching Profession-NEA to represent them recently, ending years of affiliation with another union.

FTP-NEA defeated the Charlotte County Classified and Teacher Association by 10 percentage points, with more than 600 teachers voting. More than 500 educational support workers also voted in the election, and 53 percent chose the new Charlotte County Support Personnel Association.

Dan Kwasney, chair of the CCSPA/FTP-NEA Steering Committee said the victory was a sign that "people want change."

Adds John Weant, chair of the teachers' steering committee: "In every other county in the state over the past three years, 50 to 75 percent of new money has been bargained for salaries. But here in Charlotte, it was only 33 percent—dead last among all the counties."

WASHINGTON

Creative Bargaining Spells Success

Last spring, Tacoma public school officials predicted a budget shortfall of more than $11 million. Projected cuts included elimination of some 200 jobs, despite an estimated growth of 1,200 students.

The district's three Association locals—representing 2,400 teachers, office personnel, and professional-technical employees—responded by striking against the state legislature as part of a multilocal walkout by the Washington Education Association.

As a result of the strike, the state increased funding by $7 million. But as joint negotiations for the three affiliates began in August, the district was still talking about staff cuts, larger classes, and reductions in pay.

After Labor Day and several marathon bargaining sessions, agreement was reached. Tacoma's new two-year contract provides for class size limits, salary gains, extra pay for extra work, and a non-layoff pact. There are no take-backs.

RESCUE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Kevin Gilbert

Local Association President Gail Aumiller (left), Beverly Miller, and Linda Brenize helped lead the fight to save the Scotland School for Veterans' Children, only survivor of many such institutions founded in Pennsylvania after the Civil War.

'We Saved Our School'

When staff of the Scotland School for Veterans' Children, near Chambersburg, tuned in to Gov. Robert Casey's 1991 State of the State address, they didn't expect to hear about themselves.

But to their horror, they heard Casey saying their residential school, with some 360 students in grades 1-12, was being phased out. The Scotland School gets all its money from the state, and the state needed to save money.

Within a week, recalls local President Gail Aumiller, the 40 members of the Scotland School Education Association had letters in the mail—to veterans groups, parents groups, other local Associations. They put out a fact sheet on their school, which dates from the Civil War, urging pressure on the legislature for funding. They worked with lawmakers, state school board members, reporters.

"Our state Association, PSEA, was dedicated to helping us survive," Aumiller points out. "Members of the PSEA Delegate Assembly wrote postcards to the governor. PSEA lobbyists went all-out for us."

The legislature's Black Caucus, among others, strongly supported the school. Scotland's state senator, Republican Terry Punt, and representative, Democrat Jeff Coy, put together a bipartisan coalition to save the school.

The hard work paid off. In July Gov. Casey pledged not to close the school in his remaining 3.5 years in office.

Still, the budget was reduced. Life at Scotland School will be austere. Everyone—teachers, house parents, support staff, administrators—has had to take on extra assignments.

What's more, the school opened this fall without a first grade class. Next fall the second grade will be phased out. Aumiller notes, though, that most students come to the residential facility at the junior high level.

"But in a way we've gained," Aumiller concludes. "We know, and the school administration realizes, just how effective our Association was in keeping the school alive."

MISSOURI

St. Louis Hotline Is Nation's Largest

The nation's largest homework hotline, reaching more than 500,000 students in two states, opened recently in St. Louis, with dozens of helping hands from its sponsors—NEA St. Louis, McDonnell Douglas, Citicorp, and KPLR-TV.

From 6 to 9 p.m. four nights a week, NEA St. Louis members and retirees join engineers and computer specialists from McDonnell Douglas to help students solve the night's toughest homework problems.

Hotline staffers expect 25,000 to 30,000 toll-free calls this school year from students—and occasionally parents—in Missouri and Illinois.

"It's become great fun," reports Marie Theerman, St. Louis Missouri NEA-Retired president and hotline volunteer. Theerman recalls one night when a young boy called needed help on multiplication and division.

"We had a retired elementary math teacher there that night, and she asked the boy to look for things to count with. He went to his room and got all his cars and they worked through the lesson together."

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Bargain First—Or Pay Later

Last spring residents of the cash-strapped town of Milton had what they thought was a good idea for saving money: Let's cut the teachers' salaries by 10 percent and chop family and dental coverage off their health insurance.

Townspeople voted for the plan at a school district meeting. Next step: issue 1991-92 contracts with the new terms. Simple as that.

Then the Milton Education Association stepped in with an Unfair Labor Practice complaint. The ruling of the state Public Employee Labor Relations Board reminded the townspeople they'd overlooked one fundamental principle: changes in a teachers' contract must be bargained before they're printed.

Even so, defying a factfinder's report, the school board is trying to force pay cuts on the teachers for the current school year.

"We understand the town budget committee—after all, we're taxpayers, too," says MEA President Marianne Doane, noting that New Hampshire pays a lower percentage of its schools' expenses than any other state.

"The towns are desperate. But the teachers cannot bear the brunt of the state's lack of funding education."

"It's unfortunate," says Doane, "that the town chose to waste tax money making us take them to court,"

State Side

WEST VIRGINIA

WVEA Proposes Health Care for All

The West Virginia Education Association is a leader in the movement toward statewide health care reform.

In June, WVEA issued *West Virginia: Crisis in Health Care,* a report urging the state legislature to adopt measures that would ensure health care for all West Virginians. Key recommendation: a single-payer insurance system, funded by the state, that entitles each West Virginian to free hospital, long-term, and mental health care.

"It's WVEA's view that health care costs will continue to spiral unless dramatic, innovative action is taken," says WVEA President Kayetta Meadows. "Our recommendations are made in the sincere hope that health care will become a right for all and not an economic privilege for a few."

MICHIGAN

Legislature Passes School Finance Bill

Under a law just passed by the Michigan legislature, richer school districts will pay half their property tax growth from industrial and commercial development to poorer districts.

The highly controversial plan, intended to chip away at growing inequities in per pupil spending, is expected to shift about $23 per pupil to poorer districts this year.

"It's a start toward where we want to go," notes MEA Director of Government Relations Al Short, "but we're going to have to make some adjustments to the plan over time."

Also just passed, the new state budget provides a 4 percent increase in education funding for the coming year. "Looking at the economic conditions in the state," Short says, "we came out of this in excellent shape."

TALE OF THE TAX

A Not-So-Perfect Measure

Teacher salaries aren't always the highest in states with the highest per capita incomes, as the statistics below indicate.

For example, New Hampshire residents bring in 118 percent of the national average income, but they pay teachers just 90 percent of the national average salary for teachers. In contrast, Wisconsin, with just 94 percent of the national average per capita income, pays its teachers 105 percent of the national average teacher's pay.

Region	Teachers' salaries[1]	Per capita income[2]
United States	**100%**	**100%**
New England	**108**	**122**
Connecticut	126	140
Maine	84	92
Massachusetts	107	126
New Hampshire	90	118
Rhode Island	116	103
Vermont	91	93
Mideast	**115**	**115**
Delaware	107	107
Dist. of Col.	127	130
Maryland	114	118
New Jersey	111	133
New York	123	117
Pennsylvania	104	98
Great Lakes	**105**	**98**
Illinois	106	107
Indiana	97	91
Michigan	116	100
Ohio	99	94
Wisconsin	105	94
Plains	**91**	**93**
Iowa	88	89
Kansas	93	96
Minnesota	107	101
Missouri	88	94
Nebraska	82	90
North Dakota	75	78
South Dakota	69	77

Region	Teachers' salaries[1]	Per capita income[2]
Southeast	**87%**	**88%**
Alabama	85	78
Arkansas	73	74
Florida	90	101
Georgia	95	93
Kentucky	84	78
Louisiana	76	75
Mississippi	75	67
North Carolina	87	87
South Carolina	85	78
Tennessee	87	84
Virginia	98	107
West Virginia	74	71
Southwest	**88**	**87**
Arizona	97	91
New Mexico	85	76
Oklahoma	74	81
Texas	90	88
Rocky Mountain	**89**	**87**
Colorado	100	100
Idaho	77	77
Montana	83	78
Utah	78	74
Wyoming	94	83
Far West	**114**	**110**
California	119	114
Nevada	98	106
Oregon	100	90
Washington	99	100
Alaska	141	116
Hawaii	104	102

Source: Author's calculations based on NEA (1989a) and survey *and Survey of Current Business* (1989), Table 1
[1]As percent of national average teacher's salary
[2]As percent of national average per capita income

GEORGIA

Standards Board Gets GAE Nod

With the election of GAE President Debbie Simonds as vice-chair and the appointment of nine teachers, Georgia's reconstituted 18-member Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is getting on with the business for which it was created.

The Commission was charged with a new mission in the 1991 legislative session, thanks to a bill backed by GAE. The legislation removed the teacher certification program from the Department of Education and put it under the PSC to better serve teachers seeking certification. The new commission is to simplify the certification process, improve training for both new and veteran teachers, and link education research more closely to policy making.

Comments Simonds: "I feel honored to be chosen for the most challenging task of looking closely at what quality certification is and implementing it so that we can have the very best, well-trained educators teaching in Georgia's classrooms."

CONNECTICUT

Don't Just Talk, Get Out and Walk

When Jesse Jackson marched into Hartford last summer, some 100 members of the Connecticut Education Association marched behind him.

CEA was backing Jackson's "Rebuild America" march for good reason: the event emphasized fair treatment for children, with education as a key. Stopping at a school in a poverty-stricken neighborhood, Jackson sounded one of the themes of the week-long march from Bridgeport: "Connecticut has a two-track education system that locks out a majority of the students."

Noting that Greenwich spends $9,600 a year on each student while New Haven spends $4,600, and that only 49 New Haven students in 10 years have entered Yale, Jackson warned, "The $9,600 students are headed to Yale, the $4,600 students are headed for jail."

"CEA joined this march to emphasize the needs of today's children and the kinds of public schools these children not only need, but deserve," commented CEA President Mark Waxenburg. Waxenburg led the CEA contingent on its six-hour trek, the last leg of the 64-mile march.

NEVADA

Gains in a Tough Legislative Year

Hard times made this 1991 biennial legislative session one of the toughest Nevada has ever seen. But the Nevada State Education Association lobbying team was up to the challenge.

Its artfully crafted compromises led to such gains as:

- a 4 percent pay raise for teachers and ESP in 1991-92, and up to 5 percent more for 1992-93
- class size limits of 16 to 1 or 30 to 2 in at-risk K-3 classes
- mandatory binding arbitration for teachers and nonlicensed school personnel
- approval for teachers and nonlicensed school personnel to transfer accumulated sick leave from one district to another
- approval for teachers to transfer full credit on the salary schedule between districts.

The first two items couldn't have been funded out of existing state revenue, notes NSEA President Rick Millsap.

"The Association worked with gaming, mining, and business to pass a tax package that includes Nevada's first-ever business tax," he explains.

Meet:

In Education, He Trusts

What "dismal science"? Economist Robert Reich is transforming his discipline, notorious for dry formulas and theory, with vivid glimpses of the impact of money and markets on human lives.

A faculty member at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, Reich has written widely on government, business, and the international economy. Citing his latest book, **The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism, Fortune** *magazine named Reich one of 25 individuals who are making the United States more competitive.*

Reich is quick to separate economic goals from humane ones. "The purpose of education is not simply to generate a good work force for the future," he asserts. "Its purpose is to train people to have full lives, to be good citizens, to take a degree of social responsibility, to fulfill their intellectual potential."

But it was the nexus between the economy and education that Reich discussed with **NEA Today** *staff writer Victoria Lytle during a recent stopover in Washington, D.C.*

Your latest book describes how the global economy is changing the world. What are those changes?
Technology is international. New inventions leap from a computer in one nation up to a satellite and down to a computer in another nation in a matter of seconds.

Money's now global, too. It sloshes across borders in search of the highest return on its investment without regard to national origin.

Companies themselves are becoming international. Factories and equipment can be erected anywhere, and even the most modern, up-to-date, state-of-the-art factories are being built all over the world.

What will determine a nation's success in a global economy?
There are only two factors of production that a society's standard of living actually depends on. The first is its people: their skills, their insights. And the second is the nation's infrastructure—its means of linking those people together.

Investments in education—even in prenatal and postnatal care—are needed if children are going to be able to learn. These investments are absolutely critical to a nation's future, much more than they ever have been before.

We're going through a time in this nation when there's an enormous disparity between the quality of education available to the children of the top 20 percent of income earners and the quality of education available to other children.

Why all the corporate interest in K-12 education?
Many corporations believe a well-educated workforce is one of their primary assets. In the old days of high-volume production, a corporation's key asset was its technology or equipment or perhaps a brand name, but increasingly the quality of its employees matters more than anything else.

Another reason is that many companies recognize the public's concern with public education. They've begun to involve themselves with schools because, frankly, it's good public relations.

Are you questioning whether corporate America is sincere?
Let's put it this way. I think the chief executive officers of many companies that have been participating in public school reforms are quite sincere, but often the corporation as a whole doesn't take the CEO's commitment seriously.

For example, at precisely the same time as the CEO is making speeches about the importance of schools, the chief financial officer might be bargaining with leaders in cities where the company has factories to get tax abatements that would undermine the fiscal capacity of the schools.

President Bush, in his recent America 2000 proposal, says corporations can help foot the bill for reforming education. What do you think of that?
I'm not terribly enthusiastic. Certainly, the private sector has a role to play in financing new school experiments. And some of those educational experiments have been bright, interesting—even successful. But American corporations could do more.

Businesses could hire students directly out of high school for jobs that don't require postsecondary education.

They could ask for an applicant's school record before making a hiring decision—could premise the hiring decision on teacher recommendations and school records.

They could work with public schools to create an apprenticeship program for non-collegebound students that could provide top-quality technical training.

These steps are much more important than any highly visible donation.

So you think there's an appropriate role for business in the schools?
Undoubtedly there's an appropriate role, but none of the recommendations I've listed puts the corporation in the classroom. None of them substitutes the judgment of corporate executives or employees for the judgment of educators. None of them substitutes corporate funding directly for public funding. I think it's dangerous to confuse the roles.

What are some of the dangers when school and business roles overlap?
For one thing, corporate executives aren't trained to be teachers. They may know a lot about their own industry, they may understand a great deal about management, perhaps they can give schools managerial advice. But they may not know much about how to teach a child.

I worry also about the confusion of roles with regard to finance. Public schools are public because the society made a decision that education is a collective responsibility. I'd much rather that companies refrain from demanding tax abatements than that they subsidize the schools.

Where's the line between public and private responsibility?
I draw the line at substituting private funding for public funding and at putting company executives in the classroom as teachers.

What will the future be for kids who don't go beyond high school?
The gap between the earnings of the high school graduate and those of the college graduate is growing. At the start of the 1980s, the college graduate was earning about 80 percent more, on average, than the high school graduate. Today, the college graduate is earning about twice as much.

The reason has a lot to do with the global economy. If you're highly skilled, you're in greater and greater demand in a world market that places an increasing premium on insights. If you're unskilled, you're now in competition with millions around the world—most of whom would be delighted to work for a small fraction of your daily wages.

The global market is driving a wedge between the college educated and the high school educated or high school dropout.

Given their international presence , why should U.S. corporations really be concerned about the education of the workforce at home?
The global corporation can get skilled workers wherever it wants. It's less and less dependent on its workforce at home. Some global corporations maintain a headquarters and a relatively small workforce at home and a very large workforce abroad. That seems to be a growing trend.

Any society will have to put a high priority on education if it wants to keep jobs, and income, within its national borders.

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A Child's Place

The nation's growing network of children's museums offers places of wonder, discovery, and—yes—learning for kids.

As you enter the Capitol Children's Museum in Washington, D.C., you hear Latin music and find yourself in what appears to be a Mexican village. In an authentically equipped kitchen, you're invited to make hot chocolate and tortillas.

"Imagine," the wall sign commands, "what it would be like to live here. Where would you eat and sleep? What chores would you do? How would you play?"

This museum, like most children's museums, poses questions. The wall sign queries tug at your sleeve, inviting you to touch or try out the objects on display, from kitchen implements to a braille typewriter.

No wonder teachers love these "hands-on" museums as an active adjunct to classroom learning. And in communities across the country, the relationships teachers enjoy with museum staffs are helping them integrate more experiential learning into their classrooms.

Says editor Linda Edeiken of the Association for Youth Museums: "The role of children's museums is growing and evolving. We're a setting where children can play and learn. We stress active involvement in learning. So we see ourselves as supplementing and complementing what teachers do in school."

Edeiken says there are some 350 children's museums across the country—with new ones opening every day. Some—like the Denver Children's Museum—boast new, stylish structures. Others—like the Capitol Children's Museum in Washington, D.C.—occupy modest buildings in residential neighborhoods. All appeal to students aged 2 to 14, with a growing emphasis on reaching kids in their teens.

Barbara Pickholtz, a second-grade teacher in Potomac, Maryland, says that despite the wealth of museums in the Washington, D.C., metro area, when it comes to a museum for teaching second graders, there's no contest.

"I can depend on the Children's Museum to have exhibits designed for the right age level," she says. "And the docents know what a second grader understands. A lot of the hands-on things—like the pulleys and levers display—fit right into the curriculum.

"There are other subjects I wouldn't normally be teaching, like the Holocaust. The exhibit is done so well at the Children's Museum: it's not nightmarish or depressing. And it leads right into discussions of name-calling and putting other people down."

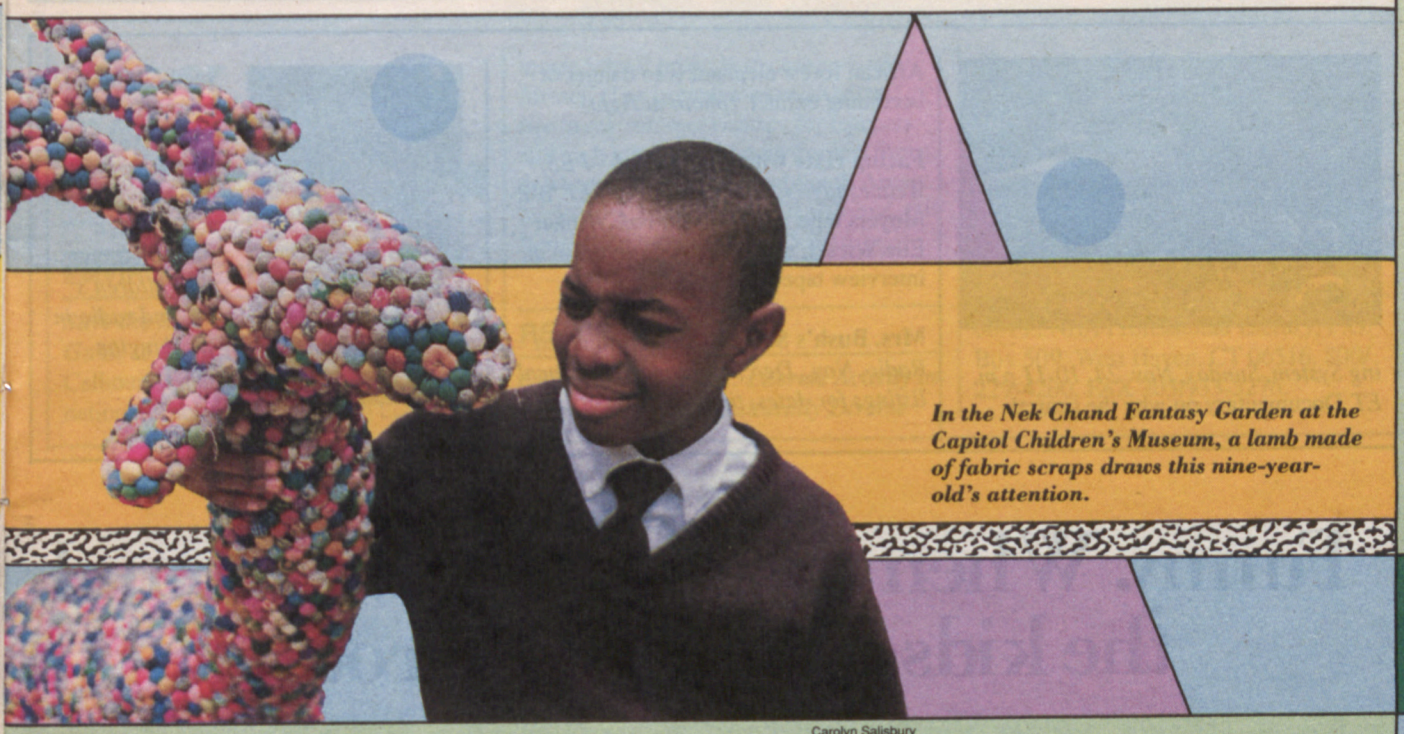
The Museum's success with children prompted Director Ann Lewin to propose bringing kids from the Washington, D.C., public school system to have their classes at the museum daily. The Model Early Learning Center accepts 3-to-5-year-olds, while "Options" is an alternative school for at-risk seventh graders; both are housed at the Museum.

NEA member Barbara Miller is a member of the teachers' advisory committee for the Denver Children's Museum. She helps determine how teachers can integrate the museum's exhibits into their curriculum.

"We brainstorm ways the exhibits can be a catalyst in

A miniature log house fascinates this preschool visitor to the Capitol Children's Museum.

Carolyn Salisbury



In the Nek Chand Fantasy Garden at the Capitol Children's Museum, a lamb made of fabric scraps draws this nine-year-old's attention.

Carolyn Salisbury

students' learning,'' says Miller.

The museum's recent Tomie DePaola exhibit, for instance, gave primary grade teachers the chance to build a vivid learning experience around the children's author and illustrator. The museum even hosted a five-hour teacher workshop with a spaghetti dinner.

Miller's colleague Stacy DiMartini, a second-grade teacher at Betty Adams Elementary, was one of the facilitators in the workshop. ''What we tried to do,'' she says, ''was make the artist a living person to the teachers so they could do the same for their students.

''With the museum's resources—a collection of the artist's paintings and other representations of his artistry, including a strolling magician—we can give kids an active learning experience, rather than a passive one,'' DiMartini explains. In *The Art Lesson,* DePaola recalls drawing at night in his bed with a flashlight. So as part of the exhibit, children are given flashlights and pieces of bed linen to draw on. ''The idea is to get the kids so familiar with DePaola's life that they feel they know him personally,'' DiMartini says.

David Zalubowski

Arvada teacher Barbara Miller works closely with Denver Children's Museum staff.

A committed education program makes Discovery Place in Birmingham, Alabama, a teaching partner for the area's public schools. For the past five years, the museum has won grants enabling it to hold annual teacher workshops.

Discovery Place has an education department staffed by four former teachers and a naturalist. Every summer they offer Get SMART (Science, Math, and Art), a 1 1/2 day session devoted to lessons in the three subjects for either grades K-3 or 4-6. The session's fee of $45 includes a book of ''how-to'' lessons in life science, earth science, and physical science.

Bluff Park Elementary School first grade teacher Patricia Banks says the workshop is wonderful. ''It focused in part on endangered species and the difficulties some animals have finding foods,'' Banks says. ''I came away with a notebook full of ideas and the inspiration to try a lot more hands-on activities with my kids.''

The past two decades have seen the spread of children's museums from a few major urban centers to most metropolitan areas of the country. The increase reflects the fact that ''parents are looking for a positive educational and recreational activity for their children,'' says Linda Edeiken of the Association for Youth Museums. ''And I'd have to say it reflects a dissatisfaction with formal education institutions.''

Funded to house objects of wonder like fire engines, stagecoaches, or giant bubble generators, the children's museums are serving kids in a way the schools cannot.

Says Maureen Hanson, a computer resource teacher at Gardner Elementary in San Jose, California: ''Children need to be served by all sorts of institutions. We know children's museums are less structured than schools. We should take advantage of that by fostering a child's capacity to learn in a variety of places with varying degrees of structure.''

—Victoria Lytle

Where Learning Happens

''The word 'toy' is derived from the root of the word 'to toil or to work.' Early toys were imitations of adult tools made in a child's size. Today toys still are the tools children use to learn how the world works. Play is children's work. Toys are their tools.''

—Wall sign in the Victorian playroom at the Capitol Children's Museum.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

Long Ago, Far Away—*PBS, Saturdays, 6:30-7 p.m. ET.* Nov. 2: "Jazztime Tale." Nov. 9: "Merlin and the Dragons." Nov. 16: "Pegasus." Nov. 23: "Hungarian Folk Tales." Nov. 30: "Abel's Island."

National Geographic Explorer: Wildlife Wars USA—*Turner Broadcasting System, Sundays, Nov. 3, 10, and 17, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Three-part series on wildlife poaching in the United States.

The American Experience—*PBS, Mondays, 9-10 or 9-10:30 p.m. ET.* Nov. 4: "The Johnstown Flood." *(photo below)* Nov. 11: "Pearl Harbor." Nov. 18: "G-Men: The Rise of J. Edgar Hoover."

PBS

Our Children at Risk—*PBS, Monday, Nov. 4, 10-11 p.m.* Walter Cronkite hosts this special on children whose development is threatened by poverty. For a free viewer's guide, contact "Our Children at Risk," THIRTEEN/WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019.

White Fang—*Disney Channel, Sunday, Nov. 11, 7-8 p.m. ET.* Drama based on the novel by Jack London.

Hawaii: Strangers in Paradise—*PBS, Wednesday, Nov. 13, 8-9 p.m. ET.* National Geographic Special on the state of biological emergency in Hawaii.

Time Machine with Jack Perkins: The Nobel Century—*Arts and Entertainment, Fridays, Nov. 15, 22, 29, and Dec. 6, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Four-part series celebrates the 90th year of Nobel Prizes.

The Making of *Beauty and the Beast*—*Disney Channel, Friday, Nov. 22, 8-9 p.m. ET.* A behind-the-scenes look at the making of the animated feature film.

Walt Disney Company Presents the American Teacher Awards—*Disney Channel, Sunday, Nov. 24, 7-8 p.m. ET.* The Disney Channel's second annual salute to 36 of our nation's outstanding elementary and secondary teachers.

The Land of the Eagle—*PBS, Sunday, Nov. 24, through Wednesday, Nov. 27, 8-10 p.m. ET. Rebroadcast Thursday, Nov. 28, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. ET.* An exploration of wildlife of North America, revealing the continent of centuries past as experienced by American Indians, European explorers, and settlers. *(photo above right)*

World of Audubon Special: Giants of the African Forests—*Turner Broadcasting System, Sunday, Nov. 24, 10-11 p.m. ET.* Documentary on why the central African forest elephant is in danger of becoming extinct. *(photo at right)*

Facing Hate with Elie Wiesel—*PBS, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 10-11 p.m. ET.* Bill Moyers talks with Nobel Prize Winner Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, in an interview taped last fall.

Mrs. Bush's Story Time—*Syndicated Radio, Nov., Dec., and Jan.; check local listings for dates, times.* The First Lady reads children's classics.

Michael Faye

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, D.C.

Funny. When this time comes around, the kids want to stay around.

"With Teaching and Learning with Computers, the end of the day, I think, is the biggest mark of success for the program. The bell will ring, and I'll have to announce to 27 children that school is over for the day. And they all moan and groan.

"You know, if they had their way, we'd all be eating dinner here."

—Suzanne Sturrock, 1st Grade Teacher
A.D. Henderson School,
Boca Raton, Florida

In other classrooms with Teaching and Learning with Computers, children have asked to take their computers home for summer vacation. They talk about school being fun. And teachers talk about feeling like heros.

Developed in partnership with hundreds of educators across the country, Teaching and Learning with Computers is an approach that helps teachers integrate computers into their own classrooms. Small groups of students move among several stations in the room, creating a truly cooperative learning environment. This could involve an activity station, a research or library station, an idea development station, and a computer station consisting of several IBM PS/2®s. A guide with lesson suggestions helps you tailor the activities at each station to work with whatever subject you're teaching.

Because students work together in small groups, at their own pace, completing specific tasks themselves,

Teaching and Learning with Computers fosters both participation and independent learning. Kids are active, more involved, so they like learning more. And teachers have more freedom to get closer to their students, and give special attention to

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

ENVIRONMENT

Save the Rainforest, 1991-92 Teacher's Guide to Environmental Action. Bruce Calhoun. An informational booklet from a national teacher-student group that promotes school projects to conserve rain forests. (The organization also offers two-week summer courses for teachers and high school students in tropical forests in Mexico and Central and South America.) 16 pp. Free. Save the Rainforest, 604 Jamie St., Dodgeville, WI 53533.

READING

Children of Promise: Literate Activity in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms. Shirley Brice Heath and Leslie Mangiola. A joint publication of NEA, the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, and the American Educational Research Association. Offers innovative collaborative learning strategies to enhance reading and writing among children from culturally different backgrounds. 64 pp. $8.95. Stock no. 1844-3-00-FF. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. 800/229-4200, FAX 203/933-5276.

those who need it.

Most important, though, Teaching and Learning with Computers enhances everything that is right about the classroom to begin with.

It works with a school's curriculum and complements a teacher's individual style. So kids are more successful learning what they should, and teachers are more successful teaching.

As Sherri Shade, a second grade teacher at Graham Elementary School in Shelby, North Carolina said, "The philosophy of Teaching and Learning with Computers works because it's child-centered. It puts the needs and the nature of the children first." Mary Thomas, a third grade teacher at the John S. Newberry Elementary School in Detroit adds, "If you could just see the kids, their faces, when they see some of their products, 'Hey, I wrote this! These are my words, my thoughts.' That's just amazing."

Teaching and Learning with Computers includes schoolwide networks with both teacher and student IBM PS/2s, proven instructional software, teacher's guides with lesson suggestions, and teacher training and support.

Of course, all this is just a glimpse of what can happen with Teaching and Learning with Computers in a classroom. For more information, call or send the coupon below.

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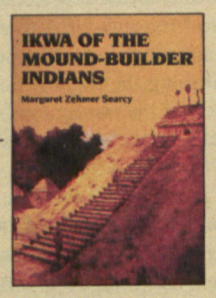
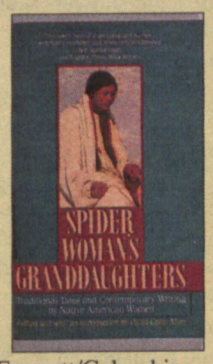
How Your Government Spends Your Money. Robert N. Hager, Jr. Color graphs show how federal spending is divvied up (using the latest "finalized" year, 1989)—plus how the proportion spent on major functions changed over the 20-year period 1969-89. 1991 ed. 32 pp. 1-9 copies, $6.95 each; 10-49, $5.50 each; 50+, $4.95 each. Prices include p&h. 10 percent discount on copies to be used in schools. Hager Guide Publications, P.O. Box 1626, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.



Ikwa of the Mound-Builders. Margaret Zehmer Searcy. An anthropologist tells an artifact-based fictional story about a 12-year-old girl from an Indian Mound-Builder tribe that lived 800 years ago in what is today Alabama. 80 pp. Hard cover, $10.95; paperback, $5.95. Add $1.75 p&h for the first book; $.50 for each additional book. Pelican Publishing Co., P.O. Box 189, Gretna, LA 70054.

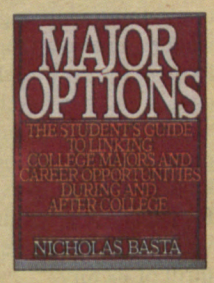
The Middle East and North Africa Map. A color map that highlights the predominantly Arab world from Morocco to Afghanistan. 57"x37". Unlaminated, $15; laminated,$25; price includes UPS delivery. AMIDEAST Publications, 1100 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-4601, FAX 202/822-6563.

ENGLISH



Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women. Paula Gunn Allen, editor. A collection of stories and essays written by Native American women. 280 pp. Paperback, $11.95. Fawcett/Columbine. From booksellers.

COUNSELING


MAJOR OPTIONS
THE STUDENT'S GUIDE TO LINKING COLLEGE MAJORS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES DURING AND AFTER COLLEGE
NICHOLAS BASTA

Major Options: The Student Guide to Linking College Majors and Career Opportunities During and After College. Nicholas Basta. Unusual guide that reprints course descriptions from real college catalogs, then shows what kinds of careers real graduates who took such courses have begun. HarperCollins. 224 pp. $12.95. Available from booksellers.

People

High Point Of the Summer

Giving new meaning to the words "peak experience," two Missouri-NEA members shattered the world record for climbing the highest point in each of the contiguous 48 states in the shortest amount of time.

At midnight on July 1, teachers **Pete Allard** *(top right)* and **Dennis Stewart** *(at right)*, with three others, began their journey at the summit of Mt. Rainier in Washington State. Exactly 30 days, 10 hours, 51 minutes, and 55 seconds later, they arrived at Gannett Peak, the highest point in Wyoming.

The previous world record—52 days—lay in ruins.

To call the trip arduous would be an understatement. "We hiked 275 miles in July," explains Stewart. "The total vertical gain was 75,000 feet. That's 14 miles we climbed straight up."

Food was packaged, sleep difficult, showers scarce, and clean laundry nearly nonexistent.

Not all the adventure came from the climbs. Traveling round-the-clock in a '73 Chevy truck, the group faced a photo session at Delaware's high point in the middle of a busy street in the middle of the night, a thunderstorm at the top of King's Peak in Utah, and a misplaced truck in Oklahoma.

"We had to climb up a steep cliff on a moonless night," Stewart explains, "and when we came back down, we couldn't find our truck. Imagine, five guys wandering around the desert looking for their truck. It took us two hours to find it."

But the trip was full of pleasant surprises, too—the kindness of strangers and friends, the extraordinary views, and, of course, the thrill of victory.

"To be able to do something that breaks through what you thought were the limits of your capabilities," says Allard, "that's invaluable."

Photos by Jim Grace

Math Contest Multiplies Skills, Adds Compassion

Susan St. Clair, curriculum coordinator with the Memphis Public Schools in Tennessee, sees a double payoff for students participating in the mammoth nationwide math competition called Math-a-thon. The Math-a-thon combines academic skill building with raising money for St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis.

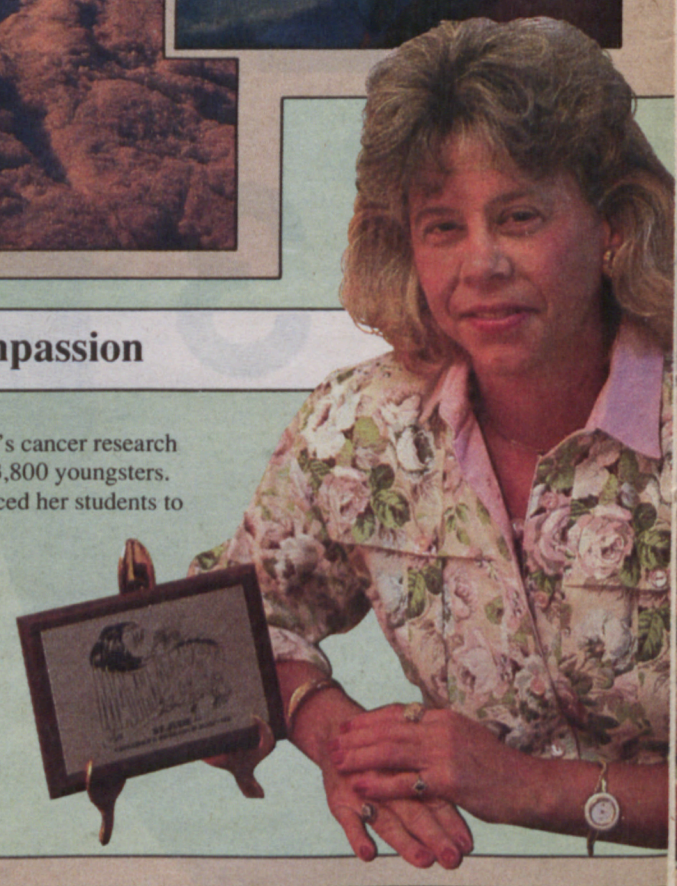
Students at schools like Shadowlawn Middle School get friends and neighbors to pledge between 2 and 10 cents for every math problem they solve. Last year at Shadowlawn that worked out to $16,000, making the school a regional Math-a-thon winner.

The 1990-91 Math-a-thon raised more than $11 million for the children's cancer research hospital, currently treating 3,800 youngsters.

St. Clair says she introduced her students to Math-a-thon five years ago. The program was established during the 1970s.

"I like the fact that the program is instructional as well as altruistic," explains St. Clair.

"I feel good that something that reinforces kids' math skills is also good for humankind."



Military Holds 'Major' Ceremony At School Assembly

Dominic Archibald teaches at Hooper Avenue Elementary School in Los Angeles. But recently, her third and fourth graders saw her wear another hat—with military insignia.

Last July, in a special outdoor school assembly, Archibald was formally promoted to the rank of U.S. Army major in the California National Guard. She's the first Black woman in the California Guard to attain that rank.

Conducting the promotion ceremony was Brigadier General Daniel Hernandez—the first Mexican American to attain *his* rank in the California Guard.

Bob Riha, Jr.

Archibald and Hernandez decided to hold the ceremony at the school because most of its students are African American or Mexican American.

"It's important for these kids to have role models," says Archibald. "They need to see with their own eyes people from their backgrounds who've achieved success." General Hernandez reinforced her message by visiting several upper grade classrooms after the ceremony and making the same point.

Archibald never misses an opportunity to tell students how important it is for them to stay in school. Not only does she encourage her own pupils, but she often speaks at other area schools on Career Days, about the military and other careers students can enter—if they graduate.

She herself received an ROTC scholarship in college and went on to serve in the active Army for five years as a transportation officer both in this country and in Germany. She left the service to work with children.

Tom Hindman

Fully Booked

"In the beginning," explains retired teacher **Ron Jarvella,** "I didn't intend to have a bookstore." But that was 20 years and 35,000 books ago, when Jarvella was teaching history and psychology in Bridgeport, Connecticut. "As the books began to accumulate, my wife, Shirley, became more and more concerned about what we'd do with them."

In the end, the Jarvellas bought an old school bus and packed it with four tons of books: history, biography, an extensive Civil War collection. Then they drove the bus to their daughter's house in the country—and parked it.

Now Ron Jarvella's taken early retirement (Shirley has one more year as a school librarian in Woodbridge, Connecticut). This fall he's setting up shop—literally—on a farm they bought outside Belfast, Maine, a mile from the ocean.

Who goes to a farm to buy books? Jarvella says the area "has almost as many theaters as supermarkets—and a little opera house.

"We're off the beaten track," he admits, "but anybody who's interested can find us."

The shop's name? "When we bought the place, it was called the Prescott Hill Farm," Jarvella explains. "Now it'll be the Prescott Hill Book Farm—you pick 'em."

Mike Maple

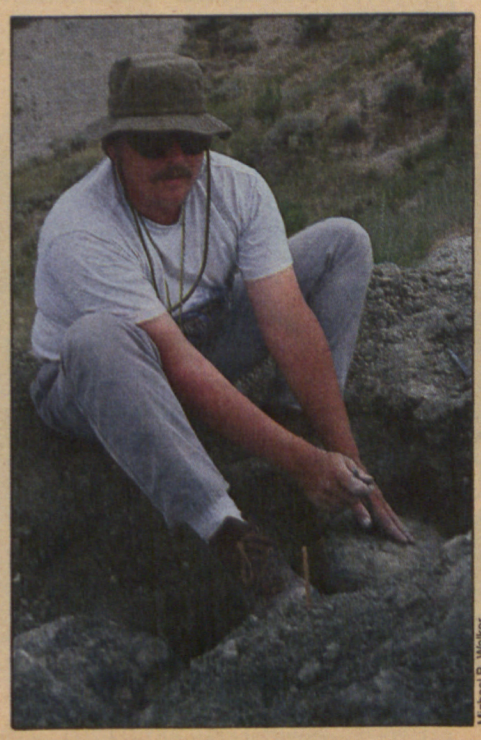
Making Prehistory in the Jurassic Fields

At 6 p.m. last August 19, while on a dinosaur dig "in Nowhere, Wyoming," Colorado earth science teacher **Don Kralis** found the cheek bone of the world's largest carnivorous dinosaur—a megalosaurus with a four-and-a-quarter-foot skull.

"I named it 'Melanie,' after my oldest daughter," Kralis explains. (Actually Melanie, Part II, since last summer Kralis found the same dinosaur's shoulder bone 20 feet away.) For the past two summers, the Leadville, Colorado, teacher has been hunting dinosaur remains in southeastern Wyoming with a team headed by University of Colorado paleontologist Robert Bakker.

"All the bones we've dug up," Kralis says, "including my 1990 find, 'Bernice,' so far the world's last brontosaurus, buttress Bakker's theory of gradual 'stepwise' extinction of dinosaurs.

"It's a fascinating hypothesis," Kralis explains, "that dinosaurs were done in, not by some cataclysmic asteroid hit, but by new viruses spread when land bridges emerged and animals started migrating from one continent to another."



Michael B. Walker

BROADCAST AWARDS

Best in the Business

From thousands of hours of programming, NEA picks a handful of media presentations to receive the Association's highest awards for broadcasting excellence.

The NEA's 1991 Awards for the Advancement of Learning Through Broadcasting have recognized 21 radio and television productions for "excellence in teaching through broadcasting."

This marks the 12th year of the awards program. The awards were presented in July in conjunction with the NEA's Representative Assembly in Miami Beach.

The 1991 award recipients come from public radio and from cable, public, local, and network television.

Topics of award-winning entries include U.S. history, student-prepared broadcast productions, understanding cultural diversity, involvement in government, classroom reports, narration of stories, classical music, environment, science, educator awards, coverage of education, and use of television as a classroom tool.

NEA President Keith Geiger, who presided over the awards presentation, said that the awards "demonstrate NEA's commitment to educational achievement beyond the classroom." He added that the awards also "serve to influence the constructive and creative use of television and radio."

The 1991 award-winners were selected from 250 entries from around the nation. Programs were aired from April 1, 1990 to March 31, 1991.

Winners of the 1991 Awards for Advancement of Learning Through Broadcasting

"The American Experience"
Public Broadcasting Service
KCET, Los Angeles, California
WGBH, Boston, Massachusetts
WNET, New York, New York

"CBS Schoolbreak Special—Malcolm Takes a Shot"
CBS Entertainment
AFI Productions

"The Civil War"
Public Broadcasting Service
Florentine Films
WETA-TV, Washington, D.C.

"Class of 2000: The Prejudice Puzzle"
National Public Radio

"Classroom Taping of CNN's Coverage of the Persian Gulf War"
Cable News Network
Turner Educational Services, Inc.

"C-SPAN in the Classroom"
C-SPAN

"Education Unbound"
New Jersey Network
Hugh & Suzanne Johnston Productions

"Goodbye—The Wonder Years"
ABC Television
The Marlens/Black Company in Association with New World Television

"The Heart of the Story"
WEBR-AM
Buffalo, New York
William Benton Broadcast Project of the University of Chicago

"Heat Wave"
Turner Network Television
The Avnet/Kerner Co.

"Invention"
The Discovery Channel
Koch TV Productions
The Smithsonian Institution

"The Mozart Mystique with Peter Ustinov"
Public Broadcasting Service
Oregon Public Broadcasting
Wisconsin Public Television Network
TransTel, GMBH

"The Rain Forest Imperative"
Arts and Entertainment Network
Kurtis Productions
Conservation International

"Rhode Island's Child"
Channel 36/WSBE-TV
Providence, Rhode Island
Dimension Cable Company
Starting Gate

"The Secret Life of 118 Green Street—ABC World of Discovery"
ABC Television
ABC/Kane Productions International, Inc.

"School's In"
CBS News

"TV 101"
KGGM-TV
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Valley Youth Productions"
KLEW-TV
Lewiston, Idaho
Dan Walker Productions

"The Walt Disney Company Presents the American Teacher Awards"
The Disney Channel

"We're on Your Side for Education"
WJLA-TV
Washington, D.C.

"Zap"
Nickelodeon

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A NEW VENTURE

Bruce Kellman

Mark Maple

FINALLY TELEVISION FOR TEACHERS BY TEACHERS

Co-produced by NEA and The Learning Channel, 'Teacher TV' will make its debut on November 18.

Above left: "Teacher TV" cameras roll in Seattle as Phantom Lake Elementary teacher Chris Held lends a hand to students working on an assignment. Above: Memphis elementary school Assistant Principal Dorothy Evans goes before the cameras to describe efforts to increase community involvement in the schools.

Don't you wish you could turn on the television or VCR and watch a colleague demonstrate how he or she handles a classroom discipline problem?

Wouldn't it be nice if your school could invite business leaders in to see a show about business-school partnerships that really work?

And how about a show with advice and tips from fellow teachers on, say, integrating computers into the language arts curriculum? Wouldn't that make your job a bit easier?

Well, all this and a whole lot more are coming your way by way of "Teacher TV," debuting during American Education Week on cable TV's The Learning Channel.

"Teacher TV" is a major venture for NEA into national television production. The hour-long pilot will air Monday, November 18, at 2 p.m., 8 p.m., and 11 p.m. (ET), with an encore on Saturday, November 23, at 3 p.m. (ET).

The new magazine-style program is designed to be a resource for day-to-day classroom ideas as well as for long-range, positive change in education.

The show's aimed at educators, but parents, business leaders, and other citizens who care about education are likely to find something to pique their interest.

"Teacher TV" segments will be filmed on location in schools around the country, then edited and produced in the TV facilities at NEA Center in Washington, D.C.

NEA will provide research, creative input, and educational advice. The Learning Channel will contribute distribution, promotion within the cable industry, and programming and production investment.

NEA envisions "Teacher TV" as a dialogue among educators—a place to share ideas, techniques, tools, and resources across subject areas, and across state lines.

So, to develop the program's content, researchers went to the source—thousands of Association members—this past summer to learn firsthand what they'd most like to see on "Teacher TV."

NEA members told researchers they want programs about critical thinking, effective classroom discipline, and community involvement—and better ways to motivate students, handle disruptive students, and assess student achievement.

To gather footage for November's one-hour pilot, which will focus on active learning, camera crews went on location to several elementary schools in the Seattle area and to Wells (Maine) Junior/Senior High. Crews filmed students and their teachers working on a range of projects, several of them using technology in the classroom in new ways.

Another film crew traveled south to film segments that will capture community involvement in school restructuring in Memphis, Tennessee. In Memphis, local school councils set the overall direction for seven inner city schools.

Memphis is an NEA Learning Lab site, one of nearly 20 school districts across the country that are working on districtwide restructuring projects.

Another crew filmed students' perspectives on active learning in Ft. Worth, Texas. In addition, filming has taken place in other states, including Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Besides exploring the active learning theme, the November pilot show will zero in on a controversial issue, present a student's perspective on a key classroom topic, offer practical tips school employees can use, and provide resource suggestions.

Finally, the pilot will include short segments asking "teachers-on-the-street" why they're teaching, and profiling educators who're doing interesting things outside of their classrooms.

"Our program will be broad, covering a whole range of issues and ideas," explains NEA President Keith Geiger.

"The show will explore how education can be better in the future," notes Geiger, "but we'll also offer pragmatic advice that can be put to use in a teacher's classroom tomorrow."

Beginning in 1992, "Teacher TV" will air regularly, examining a different trend in education each show. Focus groups, polling, and input from real people in real classrooms will shape the series.

"We'll be constantly testing the TV program against teachers' real needs and interests," says Gary Watts, senior director of NEA's National Center for Innovation and the staffer responsible for overall direction of "Teacher TV."

"One way we plan on doing that," he adds, "is to provide a phone number at the end of the program so viewers can call to tell us what they like, what they don't like, and how we can improve "Teacher TV" to meet their needs."

Viewers will also be encouraged to submit suggestions for program content. So if you've got an exciting program you'd like to see highlighted, topics you'd like to see covered, teaching tips, strategies, or materials to share, write to Barby Halstead-Worrell, "Teacher TV," at NEA Center in Washington, D.C.

"All teachers have something to say to their colleagues," says Geiger. "We're saying to our audience: Help us create this program. Help us build it. Make it yours."

Cable Connection

"Teacher TV" is one of the new programs Discovery Communications Inc. (DCI) is bringing to the revamped Learning Channel, which DCI purchased last summer.

The Learning Channel goes to some 15 million homes. DCI hopes to increase that to 50 million homes in three years—in part by creating public demand for cable operators to add the "premier educational channel" to their "basic service" offerings.

Do cable operators listen to viewers? You bet. In recent years, many operaters added the Discovery Channel after teachers asked for the chance to see the NEA-backed "Assignment Discovery" programming for students.

If you don't get The Learning Channel, contact your local cable company and ask it to subscribe to The Learning Channel.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Drawing Profits

Second graders in Peggy Dowdy's class at Carlisle (Arkansas) Elementary School learn from experience about such things as profit, expense, wages, and overhead.

Dowdy and the owners of a nearby restaurant have a "contract" with the students—the kids agree to make holiday decorations for the restaurant, for a small fee. Their earnings pay for the materials. Their profit pays for a year-end class party.

But the children aren't the only ones who benefit.

"Restaurant patrons are impressed by the cooperation between the school and local business," says Dowdy. "Parents are thrilled by their kids' academic progress, and delighted to have their children's art displayed in such a unique way.

"And the restaurant owners are pleased to have students' families as customers when they come to view the artwork."

Groups That Work

Second graders in Kathryn Bentley's class at Kitzingen (Germany) Elementary School benefit from weekly cooperative learning breaks.

First the young U.S. military dependents select cards from sets numbered from one to five. Students who draw the same number form a working group of four or five members. Each group has its own learning task.

New groups form each week, so different combinations of kids get a chance to work together.

Bentley lists several benefits from these groups. Small groups are less intimidating than the class as a whole, so shy children develop leadership skills. Aggressive children learn to share the limelight.

Everyone's social and communication skills improve. And the kids learn to organize to reach a common goal.

Early Feminism

Stimulating girls' interest in math and science careers is the aim of after-school meetings sponsored by Minnesota teacher Janice Jader.

Twice a month, some 15 sixth graders at Esko's Winterquist Elementary School meet with Jader to study issues in math, science, technology, and health and to examine careers in those fields.

Jader doesn't teach math or science—she works with Chapter I students and grades 4-6. She wanted to be a math teacher, but her college advisers told her "girls aren't math teachers; they're elementary teachers." Now, through the after-school program, Jader is aiming to put such views to rest forever.

Meetings often feature guest speakers, like the female physician who talked about her experiences in medical school and on the job. Others feature tours—for instance, one of a veterinary clinic (led by a female vet) and one of a state park (led by a female naturalist).

Geography Games

At Shepherd (Michigan) Middle School, Jo Anne Grace's seventh graders use maps

created by her previous class (see photo above) to learn geography and current events and have fun at the same time.

Grace poses a question requiring the students to identify a country—for example, "Name the country recently devastated by a cyclone." The kids write their answers and names on slips of paper and put these into a box. At the end of the day, Grace moves the correct responses to another box and holds a drawing.

If the child whose name is selected can place a flag on the correct country on the map, that student wins a small prize. If that student can't do it, the drawing continues until someone can.

If you have a tried-and-true classroom idea, please send it to Idea Exchange, NEA Today, *1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Don't forget to include the name of your local Association and your home and school phone numbers. Color photos are welcome.*

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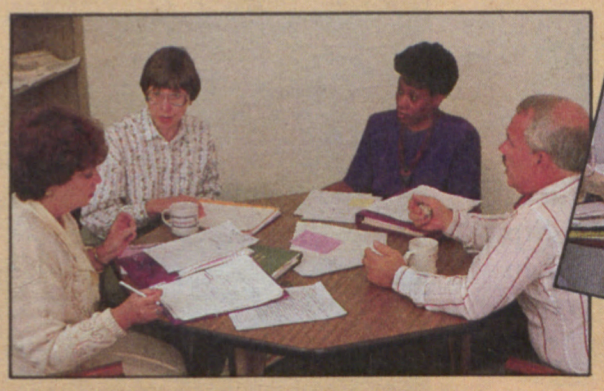
Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work



Local President Becky Pringle (above, with some of her eighth grade science students) meets (above left) with teaching teammates Colleen Sanderson, JoAnne Hollick, and Tom Stohler.

In Pennsylvania

Teachers Do Reform Their Way

"We were at such a high level of frustration, we didn't want to hear about any reform unless we did it ourselves," recalls science teacher Becky Pringle.

That was early in 1990. Since then, staff members at Susquehanna Township Middle School have done it themselves, and gotten results.

Time and organization were the biggest problems, says Pringle, who's president of the Susquehanna Township Education Association.

"There was too much paperwork, not enough time. We didn't have time to care, didn't have time to find out about the situation at home. Everything was disorganized. Kids were running the school and running all over the school.

"We didn't feel we were affecting the students the way we could have."

The district superintendent agreed change was needed. Principal James Shadle made the hard choice to give up some control—and stuck to that decision. The teachers formed a restructuring committee, and members visited restructured schools.

"We refused to tackle restructuring unless all the teachers agreed," says Pringle, "and we weren't going to agree unless we could see it."

When the evidence was in, the teachers did agree: they wanted to restructure their school. The school board also agreed: they adopted the teachers' proposal unanimously, budgeting $150,000 for the redesign.

All through the summer of 1990, the teachers planned—set up meetings (and got paid for going to them), hired consultants, met with candidates for new teaching positions.

The planners divided the school into two teams for each grade level, 6-8. The board hired three more teachers to make up the teams. Except for one shared science lab, the teams were self-contained.

Each of the six teams, and its area, is designated by a different color; the school walls—and the assorted teams—make up a rainbow.

"When we came up with a schedule, the principal and the superintendent hated it," Pringle recalls. "But they didn't push us to change it. And we teachers got to see how hard it is to schedule a whole school.

"When school started last fall," Pringle continues, "the administration kept doing things right. They gave us a lot of control—for example, of the grade levels and subjects each of us would teach.

"Neither the superintendent nor the principal just walked away," Pringle emphasizes. "It's not 'we decide and they agree'—we're doing it all together."

Closer cooperation with parents and students is a leading feature of the new system. Contact with parents takes time, Pringle says, but it pays off. One example: "Now we know why a certain kid doesn't finish the homework."

Each student has an adviser—someone at school to turn to. Students also meet in groups to discuss topics like peer pressure, study skills, career aspirations. They learn to use negotiations and arbitration to get along with families and each other.

Teachers take account of individual strengths and weaknesses to help students succeed. If a student who has trouble reading needs to take a test, for instance, someone will read the test to that youngster.

Teachers' closer knowledge of parents and students has made discipline a more ordered process. Before a student goes before the principal, the teachers have contacted the parent and had a team meeting with the student. The team recommends the discipline.

As they restructured, the teachers didn't allow any changes to be rushed. "The principal and superintendent wanted us to do everything last year," says Pringle. "But we said 'no, we want to plan.'"

The administrators asked for student clubs and for interdisciplinary courses. This year a subcommittee is doing research on clubs—everything the planners do is researched. Some of the teams started on interdisciplinary courses last year, and this year both the teams and the school as a whole will have interdisciplinary projects.

Problems appeared, of course. The worst was isolation. Pringle says teachers felt they never had the chance to see their colleagues on other teams.

Now, every two weeks the teachers get together before school. When the students arrive, the principal takes them all to the auditorium for a group discussion during home room.

With 45 minutes to talk and socialize, the teachers enjoy refreshments, which the teams take turns providing. They also discuss specific topics and share what they've done.

"One of the most rewarding things to us is having time to get together and share professionally," notes Pringle. "That makes us feel 'I really am a professional.'"

Last year, too, says Pringle, the kids were concerned because they didn't get to see their friends on other teams.

The solution: once a month the principal takes all the eighth graders downstairs so they can get together. Each team has regular 'reward days,' when students plan a special program for an activity period—a walk, a film, refreshments, talk.

What do students think of the renovation? Pringle says last year's eighth grade didn't want change. They'd waited for eighth grade so they could rule the school.

"Now," she notes, "we get letters from them thanking us for what we did."

This year's eighth graders are already teaming and sharing, taking responsibility for helping each other.

Pringle sums up the effect of the changes: "Sometimes you look around and think, 'Is this the same school?"

—Jane Power

In Montana

Something Special For Special Kids

Some of the 40 students at Helena, Montana's, Project for Alternative Living—an alternative high school program—are already parents. Others are learning to live without abusing drugs or alcohol. Still others simply can't deal with a traditional school setting. Almost all come from dysfunctional families.

For these kids, the 15-year-old Project for Alternative Living offers a chance to get a high school diploma—and much more.The Project's five teachers plan their lessons so the kids gain confidence as well as knowledge.

Teacher-counselor Mike Meredith—who is also vice president of the Montana Education Association—says most of the students would probably be content to just sit in class and listen to a lecture. But the teachers will have none of that. Most classes require individual student research projects. When the kids complete these projects, Meredith reports, they're proud of themselves and have tangible proof they can succeed.

Students come recommended by counselors, teachers, and parents. There is a waiting list.

At least once a week, the Project staff meets to discuss how students are doing and whether to make any program changes. The staff and students get together weekly, too, to talk about topics like birth control, AIDS, or how to get a job.

Besides the basic high school courses, the Project offers 18-day minicourses in practical matters like independent living and how to establish credit. An adult education center in the same building offers clerical training. Students can take other courses in the district's two regular high schools.

Each quarter, the staff meets individually with each student to review that student's progress. They may recommend that a student return to a regular high school—ideally, a student remains in the program only a year or two—but they never insist. That decision must come from the student.

The Project's success can perhaps best be judged by its results. "Ten or 11 of our students graduate each year," says Meredith. "Of those, about 50 percent graduate through the program itself, and another 20 percent go to get their GED."

—Diane Dismuke

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But now we need *your* commitment, too. For half of the earth's rain forests have *already* been destroyed. And if we lose our battle to save what's left, all that we've discovered will be lost forever — along with all of the treasures still waiting to be found.

Cloud Forests Alto Madidi in the Andean Foothills of Northern Bolivia

Inset photo courtesy of Dr. Mark Plotkin/CI

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LOOKING AHEAD

HOME SWEET HOME

In 1956, the Omaha Education Association built the nation's first all-teacher retirement home. Today, the OEA Manor is still a place of care and comfort for education's own.

The OEA Manor sits high on a hilltop above downtown Omaha, overlooking Nebraska's border with Iowa to the east and a skyline of office buildings to the west.

In the livingroom of her fourth-floor apartment, former teacher Althea Mohar reminisces about her 30 years in the classroom and the changes since then.

"I was a junior high school chemistry and biology teacher," recalls Mohar. "Children had never heard of the atom bomb or nuclear power, or of computers."

For Mohar and 210 other residents, a third of them teachers, the OEA Manor is home—a place they can afford to live in dignity and comfort though their pensions have never kept up with inflation.

"Quality living for quality people." That was the goal of the Omaha Education Association in 1951 when it decided to tackle an already serious problem—lack of affordable housing for the elderly.

"With so many teachers retiring on very low fixed incomes, the OEA decided to build its own retirement home, offering housing, food, even medical care," explains OEA Executive Director John Thies.

Through rummage sales, donations, bequests, and an FHA loan, the Association gathered enough funds to build a 12-story, 216-unit building, complete with parking garage and recreational facilities.

In 1956, the OEA Manor opened its doors. "I was teaching then," recalls Althea Mohar, "and I felt good that as a member of the OEA I was helping my own colleagues live out their lives in dignity."

Photographs by Jeff Beiermann

Some of the OEA Manor 'family' are retired teachers (clockwise from upper right) Nina Tucker, Gretchen Muser, and Althea Mohar.

Thirty years later, Althea Mohar chose The Manor, as residents call it, when a severe bout with rheumatoid arthritis made it impossible for her to move about her two-story home with ease.

"I knew that the OEA Manor offered me the most options for independent living, and to top it off, I would live in a community of my peers," says Mohar.

The Manor's facilities offer more than just comfort. In addition to a one- or two-room apartment, the building provides a host of recreation activities. Every day, from 9:00 to 9:29 exactly, residents do their morning exercises in a basement recreation room. There are also a beauty parlor, a pool room, a sewing room, and a lounge complete with lending library.

On Thursdays, courtesy of the OEA, a school bus picks up Manor residents and takes them to the nearby grocery store. Residents can take field trips to nearby museums and enjoy an annual fish-fry, open to active OEA members as well as Manor residents and their families.

"We have a number of evenings where we gather around the piano and sing songs from the World War II days and sometimes even earlier," says Nina Tucker, a former college professor. "It gives us a sense of community—that's what's so special about this place."

Gretchen Muser agrees. For 25 years, Muser taught in the small town of Rising City, Nebraska, before coming to Omaha with her family. Six years ago, she moved to the Manor. "I like the companionship and the security, and just knowing that I'm with my peers," says Muser.

At the Manor, the simple design of the apartments makes living in comfort easy. Each apartment has a small stove and refrigerator and plenty of storage space. Outside, waist-high handrails line the hallways. Benches ease even the briefest wait for elevators.

But the second floor is the pride of the OEA Manor. There, a fully staffed infirmary houses those too ill to live independently. Nurses work the 22-bed floor round the clock, combining old-fashioned, tender loving care with modern medicine.

"Everyone here has a story to tell," says floor supervisor and head nurse Edythe Schulte, pointing to the NEA certificate for excellence in teaching above one patient's bed. "They're so proud of their years in the classroom. We're simply returning the love they showed for so many years."

How does OEA pay for these facilities? In addition to the low $280 monthly rent it gets from residents, the Manor receives funds from the OEA Foundation, created specifically to raise money for the Manor and for student scholarships. Donations and money raised in annual rummage sales also help keep the retirement home in excellent condition. The Foundation also subsidizes OEA members unable to pay the higher cost of infirmary care.

Four blocks from the Manor, the OEA Thrift Store sells everything from clothing to buttons to household goods. Manor residents are regular volunteers at the store, and, in turn, the store is no small contributor to the Manor: over the past 25 years it's raised $416,000 for the Foundation.

The OEA store and Manor have become community institutions, says Manor Director Linda Richter. "Local theaters comb the store for props, and the Manor is a gold mine of information for local students," says Richter.

That education angle is most precious, says Althea Mohar. "Of all the places I could choose, no other home could provide me with that sense of belonging."

—Anita Merina

Above left: retirees warm up during the daily exercise class at OEA Manor. Left: the Manor's second-hand store is a major revenue producer.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Insurance Failure Worries Consumers

Last July, a solvent insurance company with a good rating collapsed just because so many consumers lost confidence in it and pulled out their money. What should you learn from this disaster?

The failure of Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company left even cautious consumers, who had carefully researched their insurer, holding the bag, their assets frozen with the company.

In light of Mutual Benefit's collapse, public employees may feel particularly vulnerable—with good reason. Unlike private sector workers, public employees have no benefits managers to help them sort through the relative merits of different plans. They choose their own 403(b) retirement plans, relying only on a salesperson for advice.

Also, Mutual Benefit was one of the largest issuers of investments for 403(b) plans. Its failure hits close to home for many public employees.

Although it's still not entirely clear what happened at Mutual Benefit, this much is certain: The New Jersey company had an extremely good rating from Moody's Investors Services and from Standard & Poor's (S & P), which rated it *AA* in May.

Under fire for their analysis of Mutual Benefit, the rating agencies are now furiously downgrading insurers. S&P and Moody's each downgraded about 50 companies in the first eight months of this year.

Another rating company, A. M. Best, has been so slow in recognizing company problems and lowering ratings that many experts have stopped using it. Best now plans to figure into its ratings a "policyholder confidence factor" that would measure the potential for a "run on the bank."

But something more significant has happened to the insurance industry. It has joined the S&Ls and the banks as an industry that no longer deserves—or gets—complete confidence from consumers. But there's a crucial difference: Insurance companies don't have federal insurance to protect customers.

"People never used to think twice about putting their savings in the insurance industry," says Chester Murray, who manages the insurance ratings group at Moody's. "Now an element of uncertainty is there.

"Not since the '30s have people withdrawn money from insurance companies," Murray continues. "And I think they did it then because they were desperate for cash, not because they didn't trust the company."

What should you do?

"I'd urge teachers to first find out what their company is rated," says Kim McCarrel, who evaluates insurance products for the Wyatt Company, a Portland, Oregon, employee benefits consultant. Call the ratings desk at Moody's (212/553-1653), S&P (212/208-1527), and Duff & Phelps Inc. (312/368-3157).

"I'd be conservative and judge by the lowest rating," McCarrel advises. Although the ratings differ slightly from one agency to another, each has a top rating of *AAA*.

A second tier, of three *AA* ratings, might be *AA1*, *AA2*, and *AA3* or *AA+*, *AA*, and *AA-*. Below that is a tier of three *A* ratings.

McCarrel says she'd be wary of any firm rated lower than *AA*. "If I were putting my money in a company that had been downgraded below *AA*, I'd watch very carefully, stop making new payments, and maybe consider getting out," she says.

Independent New York analyst Glenn Daily, who advises consumers on buying insurance products, agrees: "I might keep a contract if there were a significant penalty for getting out. But in buying a contract, I tend to look at *AA* as a cutoff."

If you plan to select a new annuity contract, shop carefully, because there's great variety in these products. "The people who sell 403(b) annuities get paid by commission," warns McCarrel. "They're working in their own interest, not yours."

Besides looking at the insurer's rating, look at the way the annuity is structured. Notice the options you'll have at retirement.

"Some companies charge big fees if you reach retirement and you want to buy an immediate annuity," McCarrel points out. "Others say you can take all your money out and do whatever you want with it at retirement. And some absolutely won't allow you to take it out." Look for the greatest flexibility possible.

The turmoil in the insurance market may be one of the best things that could happen to many employees—if it forces them to reevaluate the risks and rewards of insurance contracts and of other ways of providing for retirement.

An overwhelming share of self-directed retirement money—money that employees themselves direct into investments—ends up in insurance company products such as guaranteed investment contracts (GICs) and tax-deferred annuities, chiefly because people believe these are safe. But there's a risk that these products won't produce a high enough return to provide a decent retirement income.

If you're a wise investor, you'll take this opportunity to reconsider your other options for retirement investing. If you're at least 15 years away from retirement, consider putting a portion of your money in a good stock mutual fund, where your principal may grow rather than just provide guaranteed income.

Ethan E. Kra, principal at William M. Mercer, Inc., employee benefits consultants, notes that his 73-year-old father, a clergyman, recently moved all his 403(B) money out of insurance company products and into mutual funds.

—Mary Rowland

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NEW WAVE

Cracking the Computer Code

Is a computer in your future? Here's a guide to help you choose the right tool for your needs.

It's 10 p.m. and you're still awake, having spent the last few hours averaging grades. Across town, a colleague is sleeping peacefully, having finished the grades and created a small newspaper with graphics and student-written articles.

The difference between you? It could be a computer.

Today, more and more educators are turning to computers for everything from completing a gradebook to creating lessons that come with sound and animation. If you're looking to buy, here's information that might help you make the right choice.

What's in a Number?

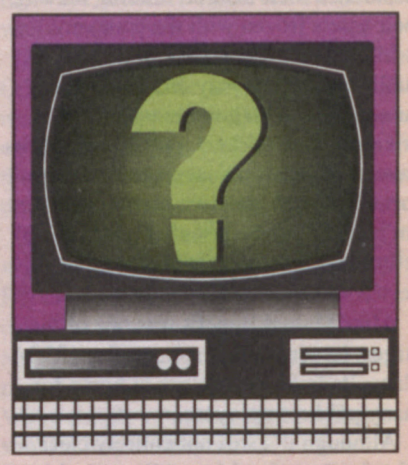
These days a computer is identified by the power of its microchip—its brain. The higher the microchip number, the greater its capacity and the higher its speed.

What's the difference between two of today's most common chips, the 286 and the 386? If you plan to do word processing only, you can get away with a 286.

But if you plan to run statistics programs, consider a 386. Racing through stacks of data in seconds, the 386 will leave you with more time—and patience—for computing.

And if you want to use Windows, a program that helps you do multiple tasks (maybe run a statistics program while you're editing a handout), you'll need the 386 for that, too.

Computer memory is called random access memory (RAM). A computer's memory size represents the amount of software programs and data files you can work with at a time.



How much memory will you need? Most PC's have at least one megabyte (1 million characters) of memory—the equivalent of about 500 typewritten pages. Since many commercial software packages fit comfortably in the older 640,000 character machines, a one-megabyte machine should fill your needs with plenty of room to spare.

You Can See Clearly Now

When is a color monitor better than a monochrome? For those who want to deal in words only, monochrome is just fine. Important to consider if you're getting a monochrome: What is that single color going to be? Will you be reading orange letters or green ones on black, black letters on green? Pay a lot of attention to how your eyes react to the different combinations before you buy.

If you're interested in computer graphics—calling up or creating pictures on your screen or in print—you'll need a color monitor. Of the three types now on the market—CGA (Color Graphics Adapter), EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adapter), and VGA (Visual Graphics Array)—VGA offers the most colors and the sharpest image. CGA and EGA have fewer dots to the square inch (CGA fewest of all), reducing the sharpness of your picture.

Programs, Programs, Programs

What programs do you want to run? That depends on what you want the computer to do. Calculate grades? There's a program, among the many designed just for educators. Design a newspaper, figure out your taxes? There are programs to help you do that, too. There are even programs to give the computer a check-up and help you maintain it. You get the idea.

The trick is deciding what your needs are. Then shop around. Take your list to a computer dealer—or two or three.

—Anita Merina

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SOUNDING BOARD

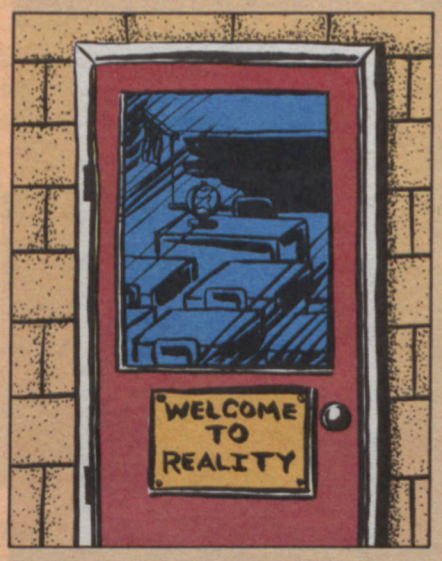
Surviving My First Year

By Madaline Fennell

"Come in, sit down, and get your bell work done," I would say to all those adorable first grade faces as they filed in each morning.

And the kids would grab their work and get started. Everyone but Shelly.

Shelly would come in and hit someone, hang around my desk, run around the room touching each desk, go back in the



hall and crawl inside her locker, and finally stomp back to her desk, fling herself in her chair, and sob for five minutes.

Then our day would begin.

After spending five years in college and two as chair of NEA's Student Program, I thought I was fully prepared for the day-to-day realities of teaching Shelly and the 27 other six-year-olds who entered Room 102 every morning last year.

In late August of 1990, I was hired to teach first grade at the Conestoga Primary Center. Conestoga is located in an economically depressed part of Omaha; its population is predominantly African-American.

The neighborhood children attend the school from kindergarten through third grade. While second and third graders are integrated through busing, 26 of my 28 first graders were African American. All 28 qualified as at-risk.

"Okay, Meg, let's try again. This is an *A*. What's this?" It was January, and Meg still didn't know her ABCs. Meg had been retained in kindergarten. Her first year she missed 50 days; her second year, she missed 70. By the end of first grade, she'd missed 40 days.

Meg was a tall, thin child who rarely spoke. In September her mother would bring her to school and—kicking and screaming down the hall—to our classroom. Once she was in the room for 15 minutes, she was fine. Meg had beautiful handwriting, but she just couldn't process the materials presented to her.

I submitted her name for testing at the beginning of the year, but due to chronic staff overload and bureaucratic backup, she wasn't tested until the last day of school.

The results showed that Meg was EMH—educable mentally handicapped. Had I known, she could have been moved to a smaller class where her specific educational needs could have been met.

When I started out on the job, I cried a lot. Decided to quit about 100 times in September alone. The bureaucracy of education really got to me.

I'd always believed that a teacher should be a student advocate, but I didn't realize that if a teacher wasn't, students' needs would be forever lost in the system.

I also didn't realize how many parenting duties I'd be called on to provide. "Ms. Fennell, I can't sit next to her. She really smells." "Ms. Fennell, I missed breakfast and I'm hungry." "Miss Fennell, I don't have a hat or mittens." "Ms. Fennell, my dad went to jail last night." "Ms. Fennell, my mom and dad had a big fight and he moved out."

When was I going to find the time to be not only teacher, but parent, counselor, advocate, friend, and social worker?

"Hi, Mrs. Stratman. This is Ms. Fennell, Jake's teacher. I'd like to take Jake and a couple of his friends for pizza and a movie on Saturday. Is that okay with you?"

After a while, I realized that the only way to get time for significant interaction with my students was to spend a few hours with them on weekends. "Saturday with Ms. Fennell" became a great motivator in my classroom.

I found out that Meg's mom didn't know how to read and was working the 3-to-11 p.m. shift to pay the bills. I understood why Jake was so quiet when I saw he had six siblings under the age of nine. His dad was out of work, but mom was at work every morning at five, in a job that didn't pay enough.

I tried to visit at least one home a week and contact each parent by home visit or phone call at least three times each semester. My students' parents wanted the best for their children—too often, they just didn't know what that was or how to get it.

How did I make it through the year, and why am I teaching again? I love kids.

The second most important reason: I had a fantastic group of professionals to work with. They gave me support every single day, never turned me away or made me feel I was just a know-nothing first-year teacher. Although my district didn't provide mentor teachers, I had two seasoned first grade teachers working with me—on their own time, just because they wanted me to succeed.

I learned a lot my first year. First, college teacher education programs don't require enough courses in classroom management, discipline, or multicultural studies. The accredited program I went to devoted only two or three hours to multicultural studies and didn't require any classroom management classes. We students asked for a required discipline course—and got turned down.

Second, I learned a few survival techniques I'd like to pass on to other first-year teachers.

- Don't be too hard on yourself.
- Decide to teach a second year *before* you start your first year.
- If your district doesn't provide mentor teachers, find one for yourself.

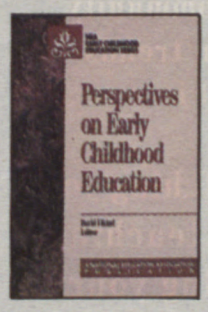
My second year has begun very differently from my first—a smaller class, fewer discipline problems, and a lot more of the self-confidence that experience can bring. I know now that I'm a good teacher—I didn't really believe that last year.

The evidence: My room has become a place where no one says, "I can't do it." No one—not student, not teacher.

Madaline Fennell is enjoying her second year teaching first grade at the Conestoga Primary Center in her hometown, Omaha, Nebraska. She's a member of the Omaha Education Association.

PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

David Elkind, Editor



This new book is subtitled "Growing with Young Children Toward the 21st Century." For parents, government, and industry, this growth presents a challenge: How do we provide adequate funding, training, and staffing for early childhood education programs? Strategies, solutions, policy statements, and a full spectrum of viewpoints on early childhood education issues are presented in this volume by representatives of 23 education associations. A fascinating addition to the NEA Early Childhood Education Series, it also includes a history of early childhood education and its importance in postmodern America, written by Dr. Elkind. Making the investment to meet the challenge will send ripples of change throughout all levels of education in America.

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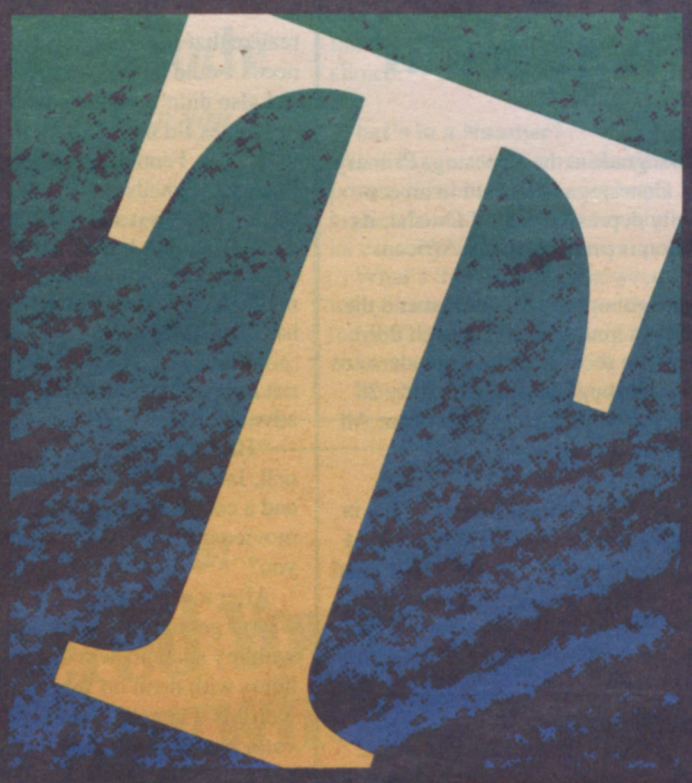
"In the beginning, many teachers are afraid to turn it on. Soon, they don't want to turn it off."

Sheryl

(It will turn you on! See next page.)



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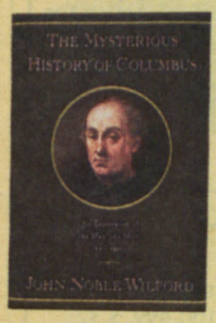
BOOK BEAT

Quincentenary Spurs Fresh Look At Columbus and Native Americans

On the eve of the 500th anniversary of his landfall in the Americas, it turns out there's lots we didn't know about Columbus—or the people he found here.

New research—or more widely disseminated "old" research—is changing what we know about Christopher Columbus, his voyages, and his encounter with the Native Americans.

Here are books to start you and your students on your own intellectual encounter with that world-changing collision of peoples that began in 1492.



The Mysterious History of Columbus: An Exploration of the Man, the Myth, the Legacy. **John Noble Wilford.** Knopf. 320 pp. $24.

The Mysterious History of Columbus is a readable biography—on target for many high school students—that examines what historians think they know and what they can still just argue about in the life of Christopher Columbus.

Author John Noble Wilford, a *New York Times* science reporter, does a superb job describing the contradictory nature of Columbus' 15th century mind—which could simultaneously contemplate enslaving Native Americans and Christianizing them, which could use scientific data to buttress a bold plan of exploration, but could not alter a hypothesis in the face of overwhelming evidence against it, such as the fact that China does not border the Caribbean Sea.

Seeds of Change. **Edited by Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis.** Smithsonian Institution Press. 278 pp. $39.95; paperback, $24.95.

Seeds of Change, designed to accompany a Smithsonian Institution exhibit of the same name, contains exciting essays in the new interdisciplinary field of "biohistory." The focus is on the "Columbian exchange"—of animals, plants, people, and diseases that crossed the Atlantic in both directions on Columbus's ships.

In one essay, pioneer biohistorian Alfred Crosby, of the University of Texas, traces the course of the "virgin soil" epidemics of smallpox and other diseases that nearly wiped out the Native Americans. The reason: the Native Americans lacked immunity because of their long isolation from the Eurasian continent, where the diseases and their human and animal hosts originated.

Other chapters describe how the American continents proved hospitable to horses and cattle, which didn't exist here before 1492. Not only did these animals change the lifestyles of Native Americans, they created the uniquely American professions: cowboy, vaquero, gaucho.

Native American Architecture. **Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton.** Oxford University Press. 432 pp. Paperback, $22.50.

Before Europeans came, what did the Native American landscape—cultivated and built upon—look like? In this book, California anthropologist Peter Nabokov and architect Robert Easton use historical photographs from the 19th and early 20th centuries to survey the range of Native American building styles between the Rio Grande and the Arctic.

Even though the photos were taken long after the Indians' first contact with Europeans, their buildings—longhouses, hogans, painted houses, thatched-roofed houses—show almost no European influence. Seeing these structures together in one volume suggests what it might have been like to take a low altitude flight—say, in a hot-air balloon—across the continent when this was American architecture.

Indians in American History. **Frederick E. Hoxie,** editor. Harlan Davidson (Arlington Heights, IL 60004). 315 pp. $16.95.

The director of Chicago's Newberry Library of Indian materials offers a dozen articles that fill in what happened to American Indians in the period after the age of colonization—a period in which textbooks only fitfully tell their story.

—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor

And Don't Forget—

Admiral of the Ocean Sea. **Samuel Eliot Morrison.** Little Brown. 704 pp. Paperback, $24.95. The 1942 classic reissued.

Columbus and the Age of Discovery. **Zvi Dor-Ner.** Morrow. 372 pp. $40. The companion book to the PBS TV series. For a video of the series itself (schools and libraries only) contact WGBH Collection, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08543, (800/828-WGBH.)

The Crown of Columbus. **Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich.** HarperCollins. 416 pp. $21.95. A fictional biography from the Native American perspective.

Inca & Spaniard: Pizarro and the Conquest of Peru. **Albert Marrin.** Atheneum. 211 pp. $13.95. For young adults.

The Log of Columbus. Translated by Robert Fuson. International Marine/McGraw Hill/Tab. 252 pp. $14.92.

The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation. **Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry,** editors. University of Oklahoma Press. 268 pp. $24.95. The story, by the scholars involved, of a Connecticut Indian tribe that used its own history to achieve federal recognition.

Rethinking Columbus. 96 pp. Single copy, $4 plus $2 p&h. Substantial discounts for multiple copies. Rethinking Schools, 1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212, (414/964-9646.)

View from the Shore: American Indian Perspectives on the Quincentenary. 108 pp. Single copies, $10 plus p&h. American Indian Program, 300 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

—N.R.N.

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Sam

(It will change your life! See next page.)

Your NEA

Dropout Prevention: Just Do It

Teachers in 17 school systems across the U.S. are getting help in their efforts to cut their district dropout rates from a $250,000 grants program administered by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) and funded by Nike, the athletic shoe manufacturer.

The NFIE grant winners are:

► Chandler (Arizona) High School. Its "Say Yes to Success" is an expansion of a program offering special core classes for at-risk students.

► Jefferson Senior High School, Los Angeles, California. "Dropping Out Begins at Home and Ends at School" is a writing program that links academic subjects and helps parents understand their kids better.

► Cerro Villa Middle School, Villa Park, California. "Operation Success" will offer a homework club, tutoring, and summer program for seventh graders.

► Anthony Elementary School, Marion County, Florida. "Second Chance" works to improve fifth graders' attendance and creativity.

► East Park Elementary School, Danville, Illinois. The "After-School Tutoring and Remediation Project" gives second through fifth graders twice-weekly remediation and instructional field trips.

► The McLean County school system, Normal, Illinois. "Target Teacher" will help students improve school attendance and school performance.

► Welsh Elementary School, Rockford, Illinois. A homework hotline aims to boost parental involvement, and build better community relations.

► Iroquois, Southern, and Western Middle Schools, Louisville, Kentucky. "My Personal Best" encourages students to compete with their own previous achievements.

► Oak Crest Elementary School, Prince George's County, Maryland. "Technology Opportunities Promoting Success" offers hands-on science, math, and technology lessons to parents and students.

► Native American Learning Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Drop In, Not Out" targets at-risk students who will receive an individualized curriculum.

► River Rouge (Michigan) High School. "Graduation is the Goal" provides a completely restructured curriculum in which student teams plan and run a model business.

► Woodhill Elementary School, Gastonia, North Carolina. "Privileged Characters: Parents and Children Studying Together" arms undereducated parents with the skills they need to foster improved learning.

► Columbus (Ohio) South High School. "Project Ahead" builds self-esteem and parental support for students entering high school.

► Fairport Middle School, Dayton, Ohio. "Turn Around for Successful Citizenship" (TASC) includes peer tutoring, mentoring, plus volunteer work.

► Benjamin Franklin High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The "Students in Transition" program offers help to pregnant and parenting teens.

► The Seneca Valley School System, Zelienople, Pennsylvania. "Take Action for Learning: A Parent Seminar helps parents shuffle their work schedules and fulfill their children's needs.

► Richardson (Texas) High School. "Project Lifeline" is an effort to keep immigrant students in school.

King Materials Now Available

Now's the time to purchase posters and brochures from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission at reduced rates.

Prices: Posters 1-10, $4. each; 11-20, $3.50 each; 21 or more, $2.50 each. Brochures: 25 (minimum order)-99, $37 each; 100-499, $.32 each; 500 or more, $.27 each.

Send payment (made out to Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday Commission) to Freedom Trail, 8391 Main St., P.O. Box 302, Ellicot City, MD 21043 (301/596-5253).

Ahead: American Education Week

Mark your calendar for November 17-23. That's the date of the 70th observance of the American Education Week, which carries the theme "Schools and Communities: Partners for a Strong America."

The week will be celebrated nationwide as towns, cities, and neighborhoods offer tributes to the school/community partnership.

Since all segments of the community have significant roles to play in education, school employees are encouraged to form partnerships during the week with businesses, civic groups, senior citizens, employers, and community service agencies.

It's also an appropriate time for school employees to work with local media to achieve public recognition for their activities.

NEA has designated Wednesday, November 20, "National Education Support Personnel Day." This is a day for giving special recognition to paraprofessionals, bus drivers, secretaries, maintenance workers, food service employees, and other school support staff.

NEA has mailed each local Association president and UniServ office a kit full of ideas for making the most of the week through outreach to every part of the local community.

For more information about celebrating this very special week for school

Nonsmokers of All Ages, Unite!

This fall the "Smoke-Free Class of 2000" has reached the fourth grade. That's old enough, health groups think, to make a serious commitment.

So the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Lung Association have joined together to develop a short-term motivational program. Before it's over, they say, children will learn that smoking or chewing tobacco is dangerous to their health and pledge not to use tobacco in any form.

The program's centerpiece is a TV-style script, "America's Healthiest Home Videos!," which includes "commercial" jingles, a rap, a cheer, and a class song. Two colorful posters, a list of facts on tobacco and young people, a letter to parents in English and Spanish, and descriptions of optional activities come in the package. The TV script and posters are available in Spanish.

For ordering information, contact your local American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, or American Lung Association, or The Smoke-Free Class of 2000, 20 N. Wacker Dr., Suite 1240, Chicago, IL 60606 (312/346-4675).

Straight Talk In *Straight Talk*

This month marks the debut of *Straight Talk*, a magazine published by Rodale Press with the support of the NEA Health Information Network.

As the title says, the magazine will provide "straight talk" on AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, self-esteem, substance abuse, and other critical health issues.

"In almost every community in this country, we are witnessing significant numbers of young people with serious social and emotional problems," explained NEA Secretary-Treasurer Marilyn Monahan, announcing the project at the NEA Representative Assembly last July. Monahan said:

► Nearly one in 10 teenage girls, more than 1 million, become pregnant every year.

► Roughly 2.5 million adolescents annually contract a sexually transmitted disease.

James Williams, executive director of the NEA Health Information Network, says, "*Straight Talk* magazine will offer adolescents information that will encourage them to make healthy lifestyle choices."

The magazine features bold graphics, "language that teens can understand," a discussion guide with suggested activities, and student worksheets.

Straight Talk topics are selected by a board that includes representatives from Rodale Press, the NEA Health Information Network, and health practitioners.

Straight Talk will offer bulk subscriptions to educators. Samples of the first issue were sent to 5,000 members this month.

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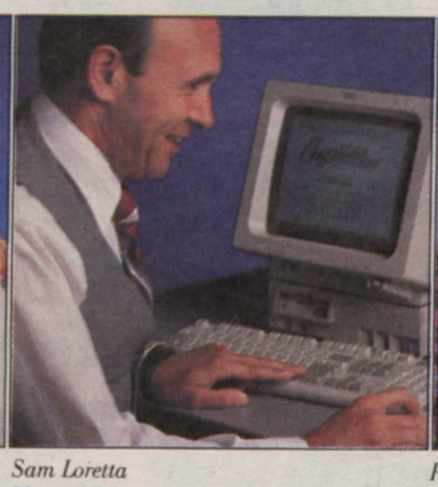

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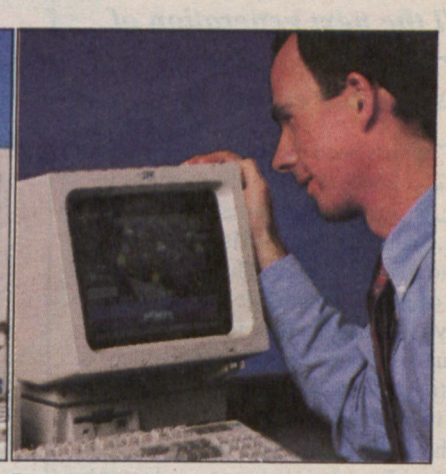

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English Literature
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RESEARCH CLUES

What Gets Girls into Math?

Will the next generation of Barbie dolls come with hard hats and lab coats?

Girls need more opportunities and encouragement from adults to explore mathematics and science, to take reasonable risks, to get dirty, and to make mistakes. That's the conclusion of a recently completed two-year study to determine how to increase the frequency, consistency, and coherence of positive messages to girls about participation in math and science.

The study was funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation. It was conducted by Girls, Incorporated—a national youth service organization—as part of the group's Operation Science, Math, and Relevant Technology research project. Operation SMART, now in its sixth year, provides girls with experiences that encourage them to persist in math and science at school.

In the study—called "Explorer's Pass"—researchers observed 60 girls aged 9 to 14 at Girls, Incorporated, centers and schools in three different cities. The researchers kept track of the messages given to the girls about math, science, and technology in school, at home, and at the centers. Then they determined how the girls perceived and acted on those messages.

The three sites were selected partly for their diversity: a Northeastern city "that looks like it's fallen on hard times," "a major metropolis in the Southeast," and a city in the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Despite these differences, findings in all three cities were the same: Adult ideas on appropriate behavior for girls play a major role in determining the atmosphere in which girls learn. And "traditional" behavioral experiences may be girls' biggest roadblock to pursuing technical studies.

The researchers observed that the girls reacted enthusiastically when given hands-on opportunities in science and math. Girls were willing to use different tools and materials. But adults generally gave them cooking utensils and sewing equipment—while giving boys computers and construction sets.

Researchers also found that adults tended to "rescue" girls, warning them away from physically demanding or reasonably risky activities that, to them, seemed "normal" for boys. The actions often led to overprotection and understimulation of girls in science and math.

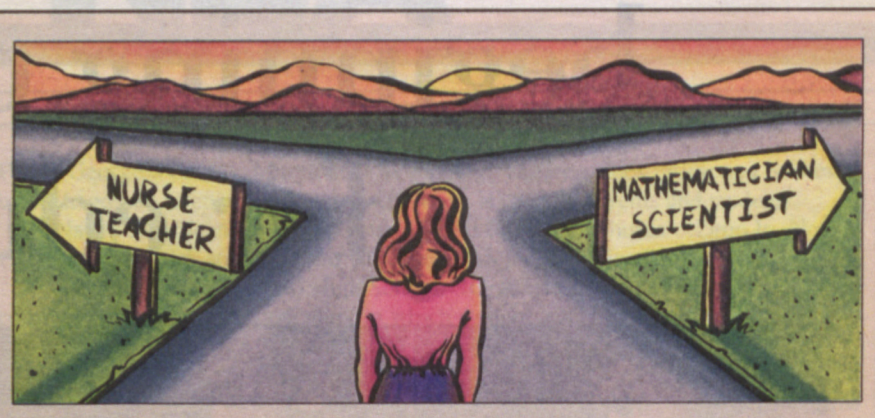
Girls need to be offered more chances for adventure, say the researchers. They need to be encouraged to participate in more challenging activities. They need adults to believe in their abilities.

And girls also need to participate in traditional "male" activities—like overnight trips, and visits to factories and labs. They need chances to explore.

The study's conclusion: When adults assume that girls are capable and interested, and when they give girls the chance to explore math and science, to take reasonable risks, and to make mistakes, girls are eager to take up the challenge.

—*Diane Dismuke*

For copies of the study, write to Girls Inc., 30 E. 33rd St., New York, NY 10016, Attn: Operation Smart



As every teacher and parent inevitably discovers, there is a curious truth to curiosity: It often defies their best efforts to inspire it.

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We don't have all the answers for stimulating the curiosity of every young person who sees these films. But we hope to provide the new fact or fresh experience that might serve as the first step.

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To obtain these films for your local school, write to Educational Films, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16C-4PB, Bartlesville, OK 74004.

Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn.

Dean Williams is professor emeritus in speech pathology and audiology at the University of Iowa. He's also vice president of the Stuttering Foundation of America. Here he addresses the full range of common speech problems, from stuttering to articulation.

SPEAK UP!

What are some common speech problems of students?
Articulation problems are common in children. They'll say "thaw" instead of "saw" and "won" instead of "run." When they're very young, that's cute and normal, but as they get older, some still maintain the incorrect sounds. They may need help.

Another category of problem is language disorders. They occur when a child's language isn't developed correctly and the child gets all tangled up or can't get the words in sequence.

There are also voice problems. For instance, you've probably heard people speak in a gravelly voice—and reacted negatively toward it. People with these types of problems may need some help as well.

Your specialty is kids who stutter. How much of a problem is that?
Stuttering affects almost one percent of the population. But about 25 percent of all children go through a stage of development during which they stutter.

It's very normal for many children to either repeat or prolong sounds when they're little. Those are the two impediments teachers may hear most often. Many specialists consider these symptoms to be the beginning of a stuttering problem.

Because early stuttering is so common, a lot of high achievers in every walk of life—from Winston Churchill to Marilyn Monroe, Bruce Willis, and King George VI—stuttered as children, then later overcame the problem.

At what age do these problems show up?
Usually when a child is two-and-a-half to three years old. It's tied in with language development.

We see "disfluent" children most commonly between the ages of three and four. These kids omit sounds or stumble over sounds. They start to react and fight, too. Then a problem may develop into stuttering.

What about adolescence? Is that a time when new speech problems may develop?
Stuttering can sometimes begin in adolescence, and brain damage or severe illness can cause speech problems. But, in the main, no. Youngsters who've been talking okay in childhood are usually home free.

Is it true that boys have more problems in speech than girls?
Yes, girls begin to talk earlier. Boys don't make all the correct sounds until they're almost seven, girls at about six.

Girls also have fewer speech problems than boys. With stuttering, for example, the ratio is four boys to every girl. Recently however, that ratio has decreased.

What can school staff do when they see a child struggling with stuttering or some other speech problem?
Usually, it's a good idea to talk with the child privately. Explain that when we learn to talk, we make mistakes. We bobble sounds or repeat or get tangled up on words. With practice we improve. Explain that you're there to help, that the speech problem doesn't bother you.

By talking in a patient, calm, unemotional way, you let the child know that you accept the child and aren't upset by the problem.

What can a teacher do if a student stutters, for example, and the class laughs?
Ordinarily other students will pick up their reactions from the teacher. If a teacher calls on a child who's stuttering or struggling, the teacher should focus on what the child is saying and react to that.

If kids are snickering and the child gets upset, you can say, "He's still learning to talk—so of course he's making mistakes. You make mistakes when you're learning, too, you know. We don't laugh every time you make a mistake."

Does a child with a speech defect need help with self-esteem?
Absolutely. A child's self-esteem can be seriously damaged when the child can't get a point across to teachers or other adults.

You might hear the child say "I just saw a new pup-pup-puppy." And you might just try to correct it. But the kid is excited about the puppy, so you need to react to the message.

You need to pay attention to what the child says and the way the child feels. Otherwise, kids lose self-esteem.

Are speech problems difficult to treat?
Stuttering can be a tough problem when people add pressure to the situation. If you approach a stuttering child with fear and pressure—"Oh, my God, it has to stop, something has got to stop it"—the problem can be very hard to treat indeed.

But if you have a child who says "thaw" instead of "saw," and your reaction is calmer, the problem is easier to handle.

With some of the other speech problems—like children with cerebral palsy or cleft palate—progress can be slow.

How do you decide how much speech therapy a child needs?
A clinician makes the decision taking into account the amount of tension in the child's speech, how long the problem has existed, how constant the condition is, and whether there are related speech problems.

For instance, a child who has stuttered for a year or less has a borderline condition and should be seen by a speech clinician over a short term.

If the pattern of stuttering is more deeply rooted, the clinician may help the child by showing or modeling an easier, more relaxed way of talking. That may take a bit longer.

To what degree can kids overcome speech problems?
Over 95 percent of people with speech disorders can be treated successfully, unless their problem is neurological.

I'd say any speech problem that isn't neurological in origin can be straightened out to the point that it need never be a problem socially or vocationally.

Where can educators get more information?
They can contact the Stuttering Foundation of America, P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749. Or call toll free: 800/992-9392.

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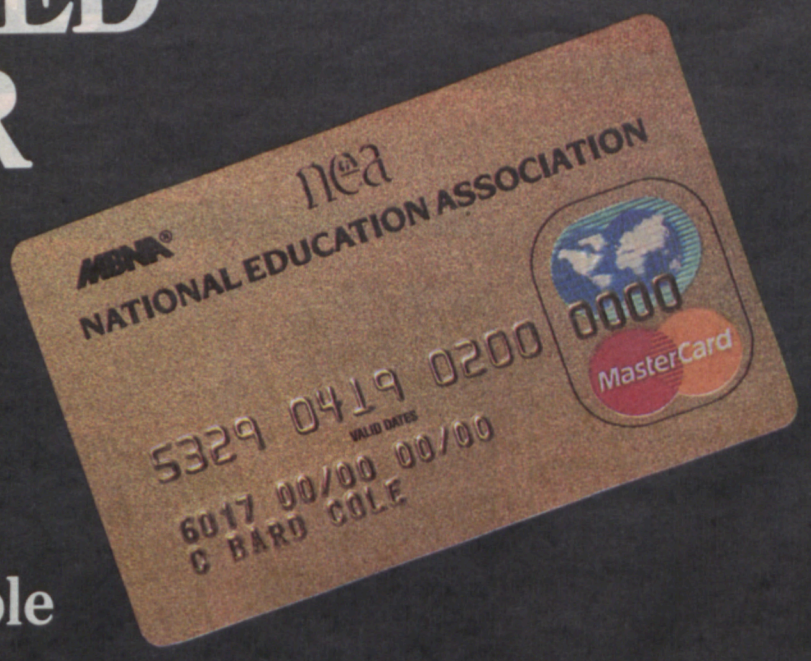

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Looking Back

An update on stories from previous issues.

PTA Takes On Today's Issues

National PTA

Newly elected National PTA President Pat Henry

The national PTA (''Are We Patronizing Parents?'' May/June 1991) has a new look, a new leader, a new theme—and more new members than ever.

''Children First'' is the PTA's new calling card. ''The education, health, and safety of children must take priority over all other issues,'' says newly elected National PTA President Pat Henry, a businesswoman from Lawton, Oklahoma.

''That means that children's programs must be funded before bombs or tobacco growers' subsidies or defunct savings-and-loans.

''Parents must also make spending time with their children a top priority, even before their own recreation,'' continues Henry.

The PTA has steadily grown over the last decade. Membership soared by 170,600 during 1990-91, swelling the organization's ranks to 7 million.

''Parents are waking up to the fact that their involvement is vital if their children are to receive a good education,'' Henry notes.

California posted the largest state membership increase, adding more than 21,000 members to the state's total. Texas came second, with 18,000 new members.

''What parents are finding,'' notes Henry, ''is an organization that's issue-oriented programs designed to help today's parents. That means addressing such issues as child care and alcohol and drug use prevention.

''What we ask in return is that all parents give their children the chance to succeed.''

Preschool Demand Outruns Supply

More and more parents are sending their children to preschool (''Lucky Kids,'' March 1991), cramping preschool space.

The annual report of the U.S. Department of Education says enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds grew 33 percent between 1980 and 1990—from 4.5 million to 6.0 million.

To help Association members keep up with the field, the NEA Professional Library has released several volumes in its comprehensive Early Childhood Education Series.

The series features the latest in-service training materials designed exclusively for early childhood educators.

The following books are available from the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. You may also call toll free (800/229-4200) or FAX (203-933-5276) your Visa or Master Card order.

- *Cooperative Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom.* Harvey C. Foyle, Lawrence Lyman, Sandra Alexander Thies. Stock no. 0361-6-00. $11.95.
- *Creativity in Early Childhood Classrooms.* Deborah W. Tegano, James D. Moran III, Janet Sawyers. Stock no. 0358-6-00. $14.95.
- *Early Literacy: A Constructivist Foundation for Whole Language.* Constance Kamii, Maryann Manning, and Gary Manning, editors. Stock no. 0355-1-00. $11.95.
- *Educationally Appropriate Kindergarten Practices.* Bernard Spodek, editor. Stock no. 0350-0-00. $11.95.

Bob Riha, Jr.

Some six million kids now attend preschool.

- *Funding and Financing for Programs To Serve K-3 At-Risk Children: A Research Review.* K. Forbis Jordan, Teresa S. Lyons, John T. McDonough. Stock no. 1542-8-00. $11.95.
- *Joy in Learning: Making It Happen in Early Childhood Education Classes.* Leon H. Burton. Stock no. 0359-4-00. $9.95.
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- *Risk-Taking in Learning, K-3.* Robert D. Young. Stock no. 0354-3-00. $7.95.
- *Teacher-Parent Partnerships To Enhance School Success in Early Childhood Education.* Kevin J. Swick. Stock no. 0363-2-00. $15.95.

Reform in Kentucky

A year has passed since Kentucky set out on the road to reform (''From Country Roads to City Streets, Kentucky Overhauls its Schools,'' October 1990). The ride's been smoother for some educators than for others; a few are finding it downright rough.

On the plus side, more than 2,300 schools across the state have adopted school-based decision making. Grayson County in southern Kentucky was the first in the state to report site-based decision making in all of its schools.

Twenty-five schools are involved in a primary school pilot program, part of the statewide move to ungraded primary schools next year. And 25 percent of the state's school-based family resource centers opened for business this fall.

But not every part of the state is taking to change so easily. In Boyd County, for instance, State Department of Education officials have begun proceedings to dismiss the superintendent of schools.

The reason? In addition to charges that he lied to state officials about class sizes, Superintendent Delmis Donta was charged with taking steps calculated to block key provisions of the Kentucky Education Reform Act in his county.

In Breathitt County, teachers went on strike when the superintendent refused to allocate funds for teacher pay raises. Tensions were high: Cars reportedly driven by two school officials ran into two picketing teachers, slightly injuring them. The officials were charged with a hit-and-run offense.

Keith Williams

Kentucky's sweeping educational reform continues in its second year, with mostly positive results.

But by strike's end, two-and-a-half days later, teachers had secured an eight percent pay increase, additional life insurance, planning periods for elementary teachers, an increase in the allotment for instructional supplies from $15 to $75 per student—and a guarantee of no reprisals against the strikers.

Trying To Survive In California's Richmond District

Once a highly touted example of school ''choice'' systems, California's Richmond Unified School District teetered on the brink of bankruptcy last year (''Choice at All Costs,'' April 1991).

This year, students and school staff are back on school campuses, but the crisis is far from over.

The district was saved from bankruptcy by a $19 million state loan, the direct result of a court order. Bailout legislation had failed after California Gov. Pete Wilson vowed to veto any bailout bill unless the United Teachers of Richmond agreed to suspend collective bargaining.

The 1991-92 district budget is $30 million less than last year's. At the bargaining table, UTR negotiators fought to protect teachers from the fallout. They succeeded in maintaining class size, health insurance, retiree coverage, and other key provisions in the contract. UTR members did have to accept a 9 percent cut in pay.

''The district can't compete with others any longer, and that means we can't attract qualified teachers to our schools,'' says UniServ Director Ernie Ciarrocchi. ''Jobs are still threatened by future cuts. Richmond can't survive much longer.''

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Income Creeps Ahead

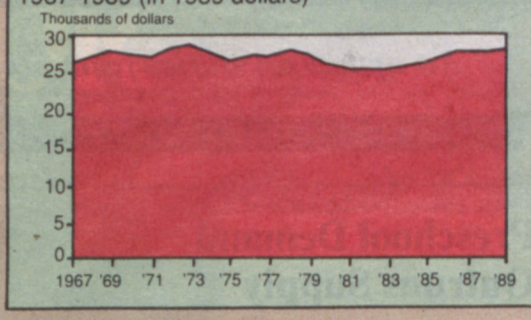
Are you better off now than you were 20 years ago? Not much, by at least one standard.

Median household income, measured in 1989 dollars, increased from $26,519 to $28,906 between 1967 and 1989. Most of that increase came from families adding a second wage earner, in most cases a woman. Earnings of full-time male workers grew very little over the past two decades.

A household includes one or more persons, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Labor, and there are 93.4 million of them now. At right: more about average household income in the U.S.

Median Household Income

1967-1989 (in 1989 dollars)



By Region

Northeast
$32,643

Midwest
$28,750

South
$25,870

West
$31,086

By Area

Metropolitan
$31,124

Non-metropolitan
$22,417

By Race

White
$30,406

Black
$18,083

Asian
$36,102

Hispanic origin
$21,921

By Age

15-24
$18,663

25-34
$29,823

35-44
$37,635

45-54
$41,523

55-64
$30,819

65 and over
$15,771

0 10 20 30 40

Thousands of dollars

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Department of Labor

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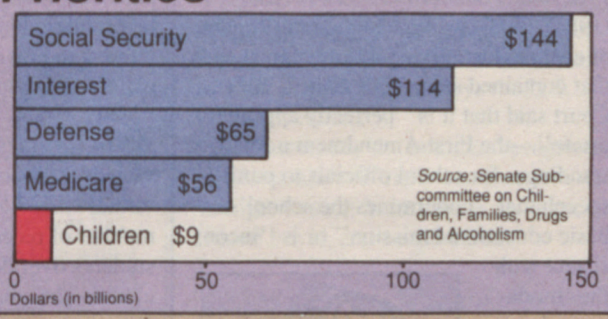
DATA BANK

Priorities, Priorities

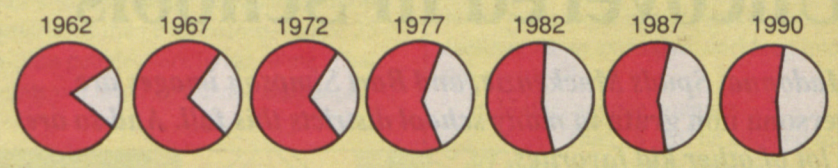
What do you get when you look at federal budget increases, from 1980 to 1992, using constant dollar figures? Take a look.



Daily News

Just over half of Americans surveyed say they read a newspaper every day—down from 80 percent only 30 years ago.

Proportion of those polled who say they read a newspaper every day



Source: National Opinion Research Center

Time on Task

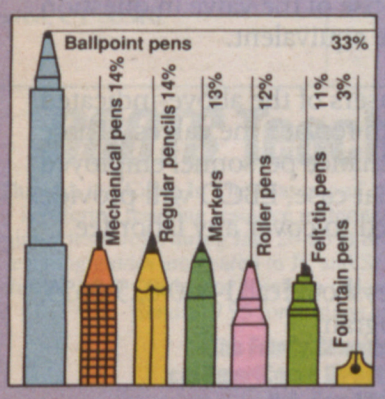
Here's how high school students in the United States and Japan spend their time, in hours per week.

	U.S.	JAPAN
HOUSEHOLD WORK	4.8	4.1
IN SCHOOL	26.2	41.5
STUDYING	3.8	19.0
READING	1.6	3.3
TELEVISION	14.2	17.7
PLAYING GAMES/SPORTS	7.0	0.7
SLEEP	60.3	53.0

Source: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1990

What's the Point?

Americans spend about $1.9 billion on pens and pencils each year. Here's the sales picture:



Sources: Writing Instrument Manufacturers Inc. in *USA Today*

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LEGAL TIMES

Dress Codes Uncovered in Schools

Madonna, Spuds Mackenzie, and Bart Simpson images are* persona non grata *in many school districts this fall. And so are a lot of other kid favorites.

Last June, Broward County, Florida, school officials banned bloomers, boxer shorts, and bustiers. Pittsburgh's new dress code outlaws clothing and jewelry that promote sex, violence, alcohol, or drugs.

In Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, students can't wear pants adorned with an American flag in an "offensive or unpatriotic position." A dozen or more school districts in southern California recently banned all "gang-related" clothing. And in Will County, Illinois, Spandex biker pants and ripped jeans are strictly taboo.

A number of school districts have taken the ultimate step, adopting voluntary uniforms for all students. Most Baltimore, Maryland, elementary school students have put them on, as have kids in Virginia, Florida, California, and Illinois.

The kids, for the most part, apparently aren't happy. In Ravenna, Ohio, 250 students walked out of classes to protest a new dress code. Students have also demonstrated in South Carolina, Illinois, and Michigan over the last few months.

When a school official in Lake Worth, Florida, told students last May that they couldn't wear "matching attire" because it was "gang-related," over 500 kids showed up at school wearing only black and white.

Are student dress codes constitutional? For most restrictions, probably yes.

Opponents of dress codes argue they violate the First Amendment and the Liberty Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment by stifling individuality and restricting personal freedom. Clothes are expressions of self; as a Detroit student put it, there should be "no difference between freedom of press and freedom of dress."

Surprisingly, school dress codes have been the topic of very few reported court decisions. Almost all of those arose in the late '60s or early '70s, and most involved hair restrictions. While students won a couple of victories, the courts for the most part were unreceptive and unsympathetic to the student challenges.

Courts have given varying reasons for sustaining dress codes. Some simply refused to recognize that dress and hairstyle are kinds of "communication" protected by the First Amendment.

Others agreed with students that dress codes can infringe their rights to freedom of expression and personal liberty, but ruled that the need for school discipline and classroom decorum outweigh these constitutional rights.

The U.S. Supreme Court has never considered the constitutionality of student dress codes, but two decisions by the Rehnquist Court in the 1980s broadly reaffirmed the power of school officials to limit students' freedom of expression.

In *Bethel School District v. Fraser* (1986), the Court upheld the punishment of a student for giving a campaign speech that contained sexual innuendos. The Court said that it is "perfectly appropriate"—the First Amendment notwithstanding—for school officials to punish speech that "undermines the school's basic educational mission" or is "inconsistent with the 'fundamental values' of public school education."

More recently, the High Court in *Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier* (1988) declared it permissible for school authorities to censor what students write in the school newspaper "so long as [the authorities'] actions are reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."

The courts have not yet addressed the constitutionality of mandatory uniform policies, but when it comes to the new breed of dress codes, it's fairly clear that most will be upheld under the sweeping standards announced by the Supreme Court in *Fraser* and *Hazelwood*.

Bans on T-shirts promoting drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or sex, for example, will be sustained on the basis of the schools' interest in discouraging illegal and unhealthy student conduct. Sexually provocative clothing—such as Spandex pants, bustiers, and halter tops—also can be prohibited because of the school's interest in preventing distractions and maintaining proper decorum.

When it comes to preventing school violence, school officials are granted virtual *carte blanche:* in light of the number of recent thefts and attacks on students over designer or distinctive clothes, the courts likely will uphold outright bans on such adornments as furs, gold jewelry, and leather jackets.

The same would apply to gang-related apparel such as caps, earrings, emblems, bandanas, hair designs, handkerchiefs, jogging suits, and blue or red clothing. In the only reported decision involving this issue, a federal court in Illinois in 1987 upheld a ban on any clothing, jewelry, etc. "which are evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang."

The one area where school officials ought to tread lightly is student expression regarding issues of public concern. The school district in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, has banned "political advertising" because, according to one school official, "it might be offensive to some people."

Last August, a high school student in Baltimore County, Maryland, filed a federal lawsuit claiming that he was sent home for wearing an anti-abortion T-shirt he'd designed. According to the student, the principal told him "school is not the place to express your political views."

School employees need to take special note of one point: using the same reasoning as in the student cases, the courts generally have upheld dress and grooming codes for school employees. So remember: leave your leather jackets and Spandex pants at home.

—Michael Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

NEA MEMBERS WHO SERVE ON A NEGOTIATING TEAM REPRESENTING A SCHOOL BOARD OR A BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NEA Bylaw 2-3.d. provides:

> An individual who is a member of a negotiating team representing a school board or representing a board of trustees of a higher education institution shall be denied membership if such denial is requested by a governing body of an Association affiliate in the school district or higher education institution in question. The Executive Committee shall adopt rules for implementing this Bylaw.

In a decision issued during the 1990-91 membership year, the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission held that this Bylaw violates the New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act because NEA affiliates are given discretion to decide whether or not to implement the Bylaw. Accordingly, the NEA Executive Committee has determined that in New Jersey (and any other jurisdiction in which there is a similar holding) NEA Bylaw 2-3.d. will read as follows:

> An individual who is a member of a negotiating team representing a school board or representing a board of trustees of a higher education institution shall be denied membership. The Executive Committee shall adopt rules for implementing this Bylaw.

Inquiries regarding implementation of Bylaw 2-3.d. should be in writing, addressed to the NEA Office of General Counsel.

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TRENDS

Dyslexia: Whirled Series?

Dyslexia may be a malfunction not so much of the way people understand language as of the brain cells responsible for grasping visual—even audible and tactile—impressions at the right speed.

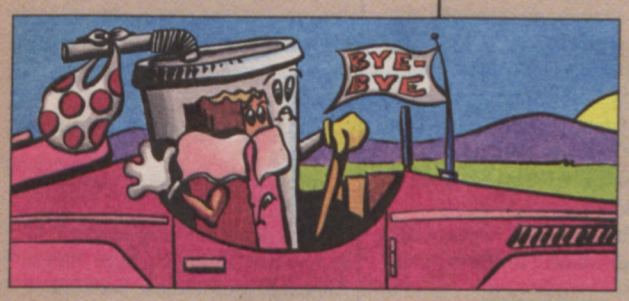
A group of Harvard researchers has found that dyslexics who do fine with a single impression have trouble interpreting a series. Dyslexics, say the scientists, have fewer of the brain cells that handle the sequence and pacing of what people see, hear, or feel.

Dyslexia affects some 12 million Americans. The new finding could lead to the detection and treatment of the problem during childhood, while the brain's circuits are rapidly developing and relatively easy to change.

Demographic Destiny

Soft drinks and snack foods may be going the way of the hula hoop, as the baby boom generation passes on to a new age level and new needs. By the turn of the century, the number of people aged 18 to 34 will drop 11 percent from 70 million in 1990 to 62.4 million, says the U.S. Census Bureau.

Marketers say the boomers' progress into later life will likely bring new strength to such industries as cosmetics, leisure travel, and health care.



Tokens No More

The "old boy" network in cities across the country has begun to sit up and take note. Women have moved in and formed their own grassroots political networks. And the results are impressive.

More and more women are heading city governments, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In California, for example, 36 cities with populations larger than 30,000 have women mayors. Analysts conclude that women there have secured a sure place for themselves in local politics—although statewide positions still prove elusive.

In Texas, despite the state's macho image, women have been elected mayor in 11 cities larger than 30,000. Gov. Ann Richards is the first woman to hold that position in 57 years. Still, the Congressional delegation from the Lone Star state hasn't included a woman since Barbara Jordan represented Houston in the 1970s.

I *Vant* to Be Alone!

Call it independence or isolation: more Americans than ever before—some 23 million people—are living alone. That, points out the U.S. Census Bureau, is

nearly one quarter of the nation's households.

In fact, U.S. households are getting smaller. In 1940, the average household had 3.7 members. Today household size has dwindled to 2.6 people.

Several factors may contribute to the shrinking of the average household. One obvious point: for the past 30 years couples have been having fewer children. Less obvious: more elderly people are living on their own, and young people are waiting longer to get married.

What's more, married couples now constitute the smallest percentage of the nation's households since household statistics were first collected.

Time Out, Time Off For Teens

Lawmakers are coming up with a variety of ways to reduce the number of hours teens work in after-school jobs, feeling that an excessive workload interferes with school.

In Maine, anyone younger than 18 will be allowed to work up to 20 hours a week—and no longer—when school in session. The law, which took effect October 9, also bars teens from working before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays.

Tennessee passed a similar measure last year, and other states are expected to follow suit.

Many businesses—especially restaurants and grocery stores—aren't pleased. They make heavy use of teens on their early-morning and late-night crews.

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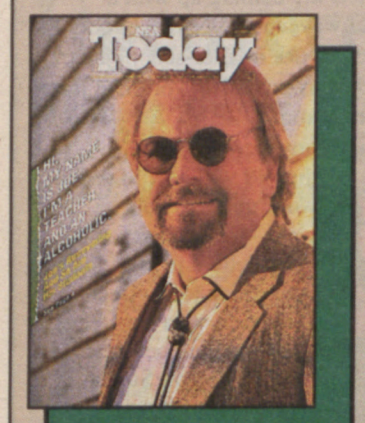
Letters



Here to Stay

In "Do You Know Where Your Dollars Are Going?" (Legal Times, September), Michael Simpson [NEA Office of General Counsel] encourages us to write members of Congress urging them to reject the Administration's voucher proposals. He says the future of public education depends on it.

I disagree. I believe firmly that all children should have a free education regardless of where their parents choose to send them. They're entitled to that.

The public school system will not suddenly disappear in a cloud of dust from the face of the earth if private schools receive vouchers.

Lionel Mathos
Sanger, California

Where Ideas Meet

Every time a new issue of *NEA Today* comes, I wonder what exciting things I'll find within its pages. The September issue didn't disappoint me!

Steve Wolf (Letters) is so right in his observation about his left-wing group. It's interesting that his rational viewpoint is "correct," whereas a conservative viewpoint is "sour grapes."

Then Steve seems to talk in circles. He says, "No group or idea is perfect, but the more viewpoints are seen and heard, the more we add to the body of knowledge for which the NEA stands." Does he mean conservative viewpoints, too?

If Steve would like to see a dozen or so conservative ideas that have not been added to the "body of knowledge," just have him write to me. I can send him copies of letters written in the past 20 years that have never been published by our dear *NEA Today*.

George Lewis
Weed, California

Girls or Women?

I find *NEA Today* articles interesting and educational, and I like the way you put the paper together.

But one recent article ("The Big Squeeze," September) hit a raw nerve. When you label one of your charts "Birth rate among unmarried women, ages 15-19," you miss the point.

These are *girls*, not women. That's an important point to make, and to make that point, words are indeed important. You put it in small print. I would like to see that point put in bold letters.

Cheri Jensen
St. Paul, Minnesota

Mutual Funds

Good work for encouraging consideration of mutual funds in some of your recent investment articles. At retirement sessions for teachers in Minneapolis, those who had found good mutual funds flashed large smiles; but unfortunately, many were in the dark.

The *Today* articles, however, haven't told people how to select the funds. Good brokers may not be handy at a reasonable cost, and even many good libraries are inadequate on funds.

Both *Forbes* and *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* have what I consider terrific statistics and listings of funds in their September issues. *Business Week's* February issue is good, and *Money* gives lots of help, including a list of recommended funds.

Jane Bryant Quinn's *Making the Most of Your Money* offers details on almost everything!

A couple of the above magazines have been easily worth $1,000 a year to us because of the good funds they helped us select.

Perhaps other readers could also offer suggestions for resources. Educators are busy and need inexpensive, timely help, so I hope you give more specifics in future articles.

Thanks for a good publication.

Richard Fitch
Maplewood, Minnesota

Copies for the Cause

I'm greatly impressed by the content, topics, and viewpoints of your articles. I'm also enraged when I read some of the facts and figures you bring to your readers' attention.

I write letters to my Senators and Representatives, and to President Bush. But I'd like to photocopy your articles and send them along to support appeals I make for education.

Also, I'd like to make copies to post in my classroom or pass along to colleagues. I don't want to infringe on copyright laws, so I'm writing for permission to make copies for the sole purpose of furthering high-quality education.

Phaedra Link
Pearl City, Hawaii

Editor's Note: By all means, feel free to make copies of NEA Today *articles for educational purposes. The newspaper is published to provide information to NEA members at all levels of the Association. We ask only that you cite the source somewhere on each copy.*

Yes to Preschool

Now that I've had time to read the May/June issue of *NEA Today*, I'm appalled by the letter from a teacher in a nearby community suggesting that public preschool is not necessary and that it is a tax burden. This letter would certainly have been more effective if his wife had written it.

First, the Stevensons' home is fortunate to have two parents with the option of forfeiting one income to raise their son. Over 50 percent of school-age children live in a one-parent household at some time in their life. There is no option for those single parents.

Second, in the Perry community, fear of paying more taxes for education is a joke. The tax base for this community is regularly and regally supported by the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. The Perry schools have one of the highest per pupil spending levels in the state.

Third, why does Mr. Stevenson believe parents raised in unstimulating environments will be able to provide a stimulating environment for their children?

His argument offers them a reason to quit work, stay at home, and collect welfare. Sounds like tax dollars for welfare will only increase.

A person parents in the same ways that person was parented, unless some intervention occurs to change the cycle. Staying home doesn't change the cycle.

Fourth, again Mr. Stevenson is clearly looking at his own situation and not what is happening in the wider society. Monetary gain or loss is not necessarily the reason two people in a family work or why only one adult works.

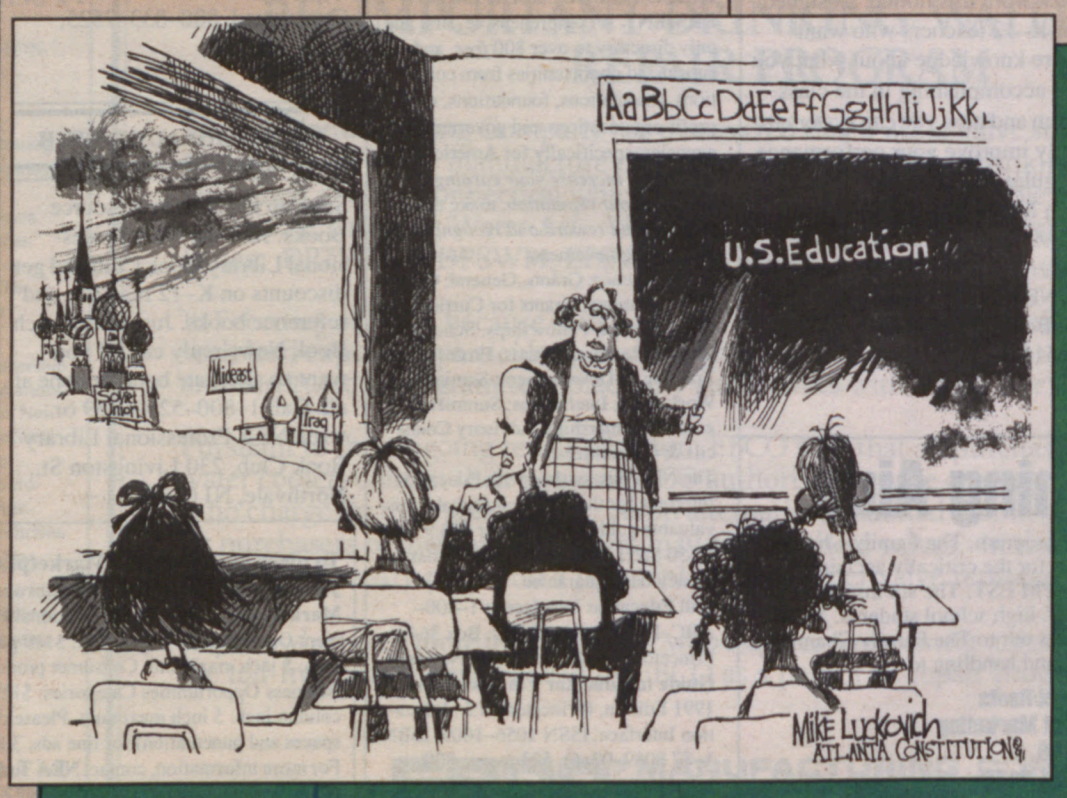
I come from a one-income home because my husband is permanently disabled. I don't have a choice to stay home and raise my children. You, Mr. Stevenson, have given up nothing but money.

A quality preschool would make a major improvement for many families.

I don't believe public preschool is a way to raise all of our youth. But to attack the suggestion of public preschool with no constructive alternative exhibits some naivete about life in the 1990s.

Finally, I must speak for the two-parent working families who are doing a marvelous job raising their children. Hats off to the struggles you experience, and your victories!

Marcia Kinter
Chardon, Ohio



Atlanta Journal/Constitution

PAC Attack

I was intrigued by your article "Democracy in Danger" (Washington Watch). This article very briefly points out the reasons PACs are in "danger" and how beneficial they are to the democratic process.

The article, I believe, did not even come close to describing efforts in Washington when it stated "some in Washington circles now attack PACs."

I am just one of 275,000 members of Common Cause, a non-partisan citizens' lobbying organization leading the battle for campaign reform. (I am also the wife of an Idaho Education Association GR-PACE board member who does not necessarily agree with everything I am about to state in this letter.)

First of all, you neglected to point out that there is much more to the campaign than just proposals to "limit PACs or even abolish them altogether." The ethics reforms include the following goals (quoted from *Common Cause Magazine*, Jan./Feb. 1990):

- limit skyrocketing campaign spending
- provide alternative resources for campaign funding
- shut down the "soft money" system that is bringing huge, illegal campaign contributions back into federal campaigns.

I don't believe for a moment that just limiting PAC contributions to candidates will solve all the problems. Nor do I believe that all PACs are bad.

As far as I can tell, the proposals would not abolish PACs but would provide a method of limiting campaign spending as well as the amount of total PAC monies each candidate would be allowed to receive. The proposals still leave room for PACs to encourage participation in politics and to provide political education.

I doubt many readers believe that our political system is working very well these days. When 99 percent of incumbents running are returned to office, due mostly to overwhelming campaign war chests, accountability to anyone but the special interests financing the races is gone.

We need to return to a system where our elected officials will listen, not because they "know where the money comes from," but because the cause is right.

Shame on you. You should be leading the charge for campaign finance reform rather than defending a system that has been corrupted by abuse and misrepresentation.

Elenore L. Hampton
Idaho Falls, Idaho

What's *your* opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Does the United States Need National Achievement Tests?

YES

Diane Dismuke

Walter Blank has taught mathematics at Mannheim American High School in Mannheim, Germany, a Department of Defense school, for 11 years. Blank's a member of the Overseas Education Association. Before crossing the Atlantic, he taught in Wisconsin for six years.

National achievement tests will restore public trust in public education.

In concert with other critical reforms, a national assessment system will give our education system national purpose. It will set standards for students, give high school diplomas a new meaning, and boost respect for the teaching profession.

The increased accountability to students, parents, community residents, and business will lead to greater national investment in helping all children reach their potential.

How do I know? In the 11 years I've lived in western Germany, I've come to respect and admire the German educational system—because it works.

The German public school system enjoys the confidence of the country and is the system of choice for the wealthy as well as the middle class.

Here's how it works: Students are given a state exam, based on the national curriculum, in the fourth year of primary school, when they're 10 years old. These tests are comprehensive and include demonstrations and essay questions.

Depending on the results of this test, a student is recommended for either *Gymnasium*—a college prep track—or *Hauptschule*—a more mainstream track.

After two years, *Hauptschule* students have the option of moving to the college-bound track or into a *Realschule*—similar to an American vocational school—or a *Commerzialschule*—similar to a trade apprenticeship.

At the end of the tenth year, all schools (except the *Gymnasium*) feed their students into technical or vocational schools either full- or half-time. These students still can choose to attend a technical college, academy, or technical university.

In all cases, however, students must pass assessment tests, which essentially open the doors to their future education.

Now, testing by itself has never improved achievement. To be successful, I believe a national assessment system must be preceded by several critical education reforms.

First, as a nation, we must agree on national education goals and standards for all grades. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics led the way with its recent *Standards for Curriculum and Instruction*. Years of input from teachers of all levels were required to create this consensus on what should be taught and tested.

As the development of goals and standards for all subjects continues, educators must be involved in planning and implementation to ensure satisfaction with the final product.

Second, we must establish a multifaceted assessment tool to measure student achievement. The exam must use both written and oral measures and allow students to demonstrate understanding.

Down with multiple-choice, computer-scanned tests, and classes on how to take them. Up with performance tests that require students to organize thoughts, debate, and demonstrate what they've learned. Employers want graduates who can think and solve problems.

Third, we must increase federal funding of our public school system. A well-educated child is a national asset. States and local communities must still control schools, but easing their financial burden will go a long way toward regaining public support for education.

Finally, we need to follow Germany's example and create a multilevel post-primary public education system that can provide the opportunity for students to change direction and for parents to be involved in their children's choices.

It may take us decades to put these items in place. But when we do, students and parents will know that what we do in the classroom is the most important thing being done in school. Social promotions will become a thing of the past, replaced by a set of options, each connected to clear standards of achievement.

"Do we need national achievement tests?" is the wrong question. Instead, we should be asking, "When will we have national testing, and in what form?"

Let's not forget: The public's perception of the teaching profession will be molded by our actions and proposals on this issue.

NO

Robert Chase

Kathleen Trued Peterson teaches sixth grade at Magaway Elementary School in Sterling Heights, Michigan. Over the course of her career, she's also taught English, math, drama, music, and history. She chairs the Utica Education Association's public relations committee.

We don't need and shouldn't have national achievement tests, for a whole host of reasons. Just off the top, national tests will:

- ► Limit youngsters' right to pursue all learning opportunities now open to them.
- ► Force teachers to respond by teaching to the test in the language of the test, rather than teaching in a proactive, motivating, and personal way.
- ► Frustrate and de-energize many youngsters who see such tests as personal attacks or boring exercises rather than evaluative tools.
- ► Drain valuable funds needed for student instruction to pay for test development, printing, distribution, implementation, and evaluation.
- ► Reduce already-strained learning and teaching time.

But here's the most important reason to steer clear of national tests: It would be next to impossible to develop a single test that would fairly evaluate our extremely diverse—multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual—student population.

The demand for a national test comes from business. In creating a new product, business looks for uniformity, quality, economy of production, and marketability. And that's how business thinks we should "produce" students.

As teachers, we, too, want quality, marketability, and economical delivery. But we don't want uniformity; we don't want to deny our students their differences and their freedom.

When businesspeople manufacture a product, they select only those raw materials that meet minimum standards. The rest are rejected. As the assembly line moves, testing is done continuously to ensure accuracy and uniformity.

But our products, our students, come from a variety of sources. They're "manufactured" in a variety of ways and in a range of conditions. No one is rejected.

Students are developed from their "as is" arrival through "delivery" at the end of the formal education line. Some arrive at age two or three. Others are introduced into the line at higher grades, in differing conditions.

Some leave prior to their scheduled delivery—not quite the finished products we hope for. Others stay on the line for 12 years—plus preschool, enrichment programs, and sports. Should all these be evaluated by the same standards?

In other cultures, in other countries, the rewards of doing well on tests are built into children from an early age. Though many American children are also focused on doing well on tests, many others come from environments where it's of no consequence or value to do well on tests, or even to do well in school.

Shouldn't our moral—and financial—priority be to work with parents and families, helping them meet the needs of their children?

In Michigan, students take several major statewide exams. Though we're told no comparisons of scores should be made, we nevertheless feel pressure from different sources to prepare the children for the test.

Why? The results for each building and district are public and are used in real estate and business promotions. Test results are also used to reform curriculum and teaching practices.

While I find the results somewhat useful in identifying trends, students never see their own test results; they don't get the chance to learn from them.

In my classroom, testing is part of the education process. I test continually. My tests are oral and written, formal and informal, objective and essay.

Each test I give has a critical, immediate purpose—to provide feedback to me and to my students, to help *us* improve. Youngsters need feedback, as does each of us, and the quicker the feedback, the more effective the learning.

Will national achievement tests provide the feedback I need to help me do a better job? Will they provide individual feedback to my students to help them learn? I know state tests haven't done so.

Testing is a powerful tool. We must be certain that all tests are designed to enhance each child's education and contribute to each child's success. A national achievement test simply won't do that.

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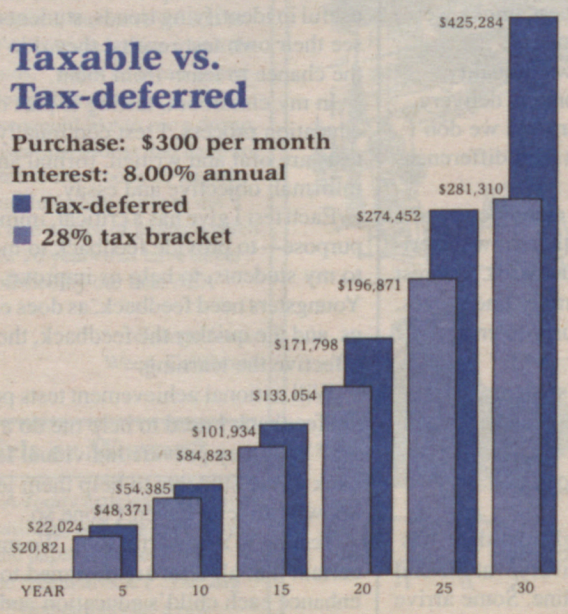

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